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AUTHOR Duke, Christopher
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ABSTRACT

This report on Australia is one of a series of reports on the development of recurrent education in member countries by the Center for Educational Research and Innovation. The report outlines the Australian educational system, surveys official views and policies in education and government, and compares these to a checklist of the basic principles of recurrent education. The first part of the document briefly explores the meaning of recurrent education as the term is being employed in OECD and other circles. Recurrent education is an alternative educational planning strategy, the purpose of which is to provide opportunities for alternate post secondary education with other activities throughout life. The difference between the concept of recurrent education and permanent, continuous, or life long education is that recurrent education stresses a specific long-range strategy which relates to economic and manpower policies and restructuring the present formal system of education. The educational changes implied by recurrent education are inseparable from wider social changes. In Australia there is no official commitment to a policy or strategy of recurrent education although official statements and initiatives have included component elements. The latter half of the document analyzes trends toward recurrent education within the formal educational system and within Australian society, the professions, the world of work, and adult education. In the conclusion the problems in planning and implementing recurrent education in Australia are discussed. (Author/SH)

ED 099288

*Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)*

# RECURRENT EDUCATION

## Policy and Development in OECD Member Countries

## AUSTRALIA

by Dr. Christopher DUKE
Director, Centre for Continuing Education,
Australian National University,
Canberra

SP 007 986

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CONTENTS


Preface ..... 5

1. INTRODUCTION ..... 7

1.1 Recurrent education and other terms ..... 7
1.2 Meanings of recurrent education ..... 8
1.3 Checklist of basic principles ..... 13
1.4 Sources of information ..... 15

2. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY ..... 16

2.1 Objective features ..... 16
2.2 Values and orientation ..... 17

3. THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION ..... 19

3.1 School education ..... 19
3.2 Tertiary education ..... 20
3.3 Technical education ..... 21
3.4 Informal education ..... 23
3.5 In-service education ..... 24

4. OFFICIAL VIEWS AND POLICIES ..... 25

4.1 Review against checklist of basic principles ..... 25
4.2 Major education inquiries and policy statements ..... 28

5. TOWARDS RECURRENT EDUCATION ? - TRENDS AND IDEAS WITHIN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM ..... 43

5.1 Some university illustrations ..... 44
5.2 An open university ? ..... 47
5.3 University courses of study ..... 49
5.4 Colleges of advanced education ..... 50
5.5 The post-compulsory non-tertiary sector ..... 53

6. TOWARDS RECURRENT EDUCATION ? - TRENDS AND IDEAS ELSEWHERE ..... 60

6.1 General societal trends ..... 60
6.2 Trends among some professions ..... 61
6.3 Other aspects of the world of work ..... 71
6.4 Adult education ..... 76

7. PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS ..... 78

7.1 Review ..... 78
7.2 Specific areas for inquiry ..... 80

8. SOURCES ..... 83

## PREFACE

Recurrent education on which CERI has been carrying out preparatory work over the last few years, has rapidly become one of the most interesting and promising alternatives for the future development of the educational system and its interaction with the world of work.

Through a recent publication called : "Recurrent Education : A Strategy for Lifelong Learning" (CERI/OECD, 1973), CERI has made explicit the assumptions on which a policy for recurrent education is based and tried to identify its relation to social and labour market policies.

The essence of the concept is that it distributes education over the lifespan of the individual in a recurring way. This means a development away from the present practice of a long uninterrupted pre-work period of full-time schooling. It also implies the alternation of education with the individual's other activities in life - principally, of course, his work : but his leisure time and even his retirement might also be included. Hence the essential potential outcome of recurrent education would be the individual's liberation from the strict sequence of education-work-leisure-retirement and his freedom to mix and alternate these phases of life within the limit of what is socially possible and to the satisfaction of his own desires and needs.

At this point, CERI has considered it as essential to endeavour to present the actual developments in Member countries concerning recurrent education. As part of this project on recurrent education CERI is now issuing a number of country reports on recurrent education. These reports are intended both to describe existing educational provision which qualifies for classification under the heading of recurrent education, and to attempt an estimation of future developments in this field.

The present report on Australia, written by Dr. C. Duke at the Australian National University, Canberra, will be followed by other reports from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan, Netherlands,

New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Reports are already available for the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Yugoslavia and the State of New York.

J.R. Gass
Director, Centre for
Educational Research
and Innovation.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 RECURRENT EDUCATION AND OTHER TERMS

Recurrent education is not a familiar term among Australians interested in education. (Integrated) lifelong education, although known for a number of years, has not achieved general currency either, and the system of ideas contained in this and the term permanent education is comprehended and accepted by only a few educational theorists and still fewer administrators.

The term continuing education has been used for perhaps five years, and has gained popularity in recent months, both as the name for several new providing and coordinating units of post-secondary education and as a substitution for adult education. The substitution is sometimes deliberately chosen to convey a wider meaning; in other instances it is unexplained, and adopted apparently merely as fashion.

Further education is another term which has gained support in recent years, and which appears to find favour in some (federal and state) official circles. Recurrent education was scarcely heard of within Australia before 1973, but in this year the interim committee for the new Australian Schools Commission, in Schools in Australia, gave the term official recognition in a short and widely debated report. The debate, however, has turned on other aspects of the report, notably the level of government support appropriate for private schools; recurrent education has attracted no public interest.

This report therefore first explores briefly the meanings of recurrent education as the term is being employed in OECD and other, especially European, circles, before considering the Australian situation. It endeavours to differentiate what is being done (actions) from what is being planned (policies), and what is being talked about (suggestions, exhortations etc.). There is a temptation to write of ideal-seeking propositions as if they were all but policy, and to describe unrelated or randomly connected trends and events as if they were both causally and purposefully related. The report therefore seeks to distinguish what is from what some hold ought to be, official from other expressions of what is desirable, and systemic thought using a perspective of recurrent education from scattered phenomena that cannot accurately be described as a system.

## 1.2 MEANINGS OF RECURRENT EDUCATION

Recurrent education is explained succinctly by the Director of OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (Gass, 1973) and explored more fully in another OECD publication Recurrent Education : A Strategy for Lifelong Learning (1973). Gass explains OECD's interest as arising from the intimate connection between education and social and economic progress, and from a widespread sense of crisis in education, a sense of crisis also explored through much educational writing sponsored by Unesco He finds "clear signs" that the "traditional educational model which has taken the form of a progressive extension upwards of full-time education for young people is less viable than in the past". After listing some of the shortcomings of this system for different ages and phases of life he suggests that it is over-simplistic to develop the educational system as if its main task is to turn out a pre-determined set of "educational products" for the economy : the best hope of inter-connecting the educational and economic systems lies in allowing individuals the possibility of going into work or other social activities without sacrificing later access to education, spreading educational activities out more through the whole span of life. Spreading educational opportunities thus through a person's lifetime is an alternative to the increasing initial full-time period of education which has hitherto been seen as the way to individual development and to greater equality :

> we should break the monopoly of the 16-19 age group on access to higher education - it will always favour the children of the existing social elites; spread the right to education to the adult, and in particular the early adult years; encourage firms, trade unions and public administration to accept responsibility for developing individuals through education and training; allow more flexible procedures for acquiring professional qualifications ... (Gass)

Recurrent education, then, offers an alternative strategy for the whole education system, embracing earlier participation of young adults in work instead of a lengthening period of time segregated into education institutions. The OECD analysis of the concept and its attraction mentions the following : the malaise affecting much secondary education (problems of alienation, drop-out, poor discipline); social and socio-educational arguments against spending the whole of one's youth in the special environment of school or college, perhaps to the detriment through deprivation of other parts of the social system; the problem of employing highly qualified education-leavers below the level of their expectations, and consequent

disillusionment with tertiary education; the expansion of adult education and its inappropriateness or inadequacy as a second chance for those relatively unsuccessful at school; the expansion and obsolescence of knowledge; and the social divisiveness of a widening education/generation gap exacerbated by the lesser educational attainment of those senior to present-day students. The analysis distinguishes recurrent education from the earlier concept of permanent education by putting alternation between education and other activities at the centre of the definition. It is conceived as an "alternative educational strategy" which is inseparable from wider social change, a long-term planning strategy rather than a proposal for sudden radical change.

The OECD analysis spends a little time in relating this concept with those of permanent, continuous and lifelong education, suggesting that these earlier formulations left it too vague as to how lifelong education opportunities were to be provided, and as to their relation with lifelong learning; OECD looks particularly to the 16-19 age span as a critical point for moving existing education systems towards recurrent education :

> "Education" is organised and structured learning, confined to an intentionally created situation. This is not necessarily an institutionalised or school situation, although school represents the prototype of the intentional and formal learning situation ... learning process is not restricted to any particular situation or environment. But education, because it requires a certain abstention and distance from other activities, cannot conceivably be a permanent and continuous process ... "Education" provides organised conditions for learning, enabling the students to acquire new knowledge and to put into a general context the facts and experience they have absorbed in unorganised learning situations... the need for opportunities to alternate incidental and informal lifelong learning with more organised and intentional educational opportunities is rapidly increasing ...

We need not labour the differences between recurrent education and other somewhat similar concepts which have come from Europe to Australia in recent years. The OECD analysis itself comments a little later that recurrent education is not in all its implications a radically new proposition for an alternative educational future, and refers to the Council of Europe's work on permanent education; the novelty is in the stress on a specific strategy which relates to economic and manpower policies, and on restructuring the present formal system of education to facilitate alternation between education and other forms of activity (of learning) throughout life.

For Australia the inter-related ideas contained in these various terms are all somewhat similar by contrast with the assumptions on which the country's present educational arrangements are based; all imply a significant restructuring of thought and provision in the same general direction. However, recurrent education offers some protection from the charge levelled against permanent education, that it is a high-flown and impractical ideal, a gleam in the eye of theoreticians, which has made no difference to the experience of students in school and college.

The similarity of general direction is clear from the Unesco Commission report Learning To Be, or, for instance, R.H. Dave's recent Lifelong Education and School Curriculum Reform, a monograph from The Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg, which explores both the "concept-characteristics" of lifelong education and the implications in the widest sense of that word for school curricula. Dave embraces within lifelong education the entire lifespan of the individual, including all existing stages of education, non-formal education and incidental learning, the role of the home and of the community and the educative potential of institutions other than schools, colleges and universities, such as places of employment. Lifelong education is defined not as the possession or property of any particular sector or interest group - such as adult education - but as an organising principle for all education. While it differs from recurrent education, as formulated by OECD, in being less immediately operational, there is no conflict of meaning or purpose. Both suggest a complete rethinking of education as a system and a process, in the context of the other (political, economic, cultural etc.) elements of the total social system. Lifelong education, also, recognising that the complete change envisaged "is no doubt a stupendous task demanding intensive efforts over a long period of time", yet suggests that there are some implications "such as the incorporation of some new instructional objectives and the adoption of certain learning strategies ... which can be put into practice to a large extent without delay ..." (Dave). The emphasis here is on process changes within the school following a firm decision about policy; it is complementary to recurrent education's emphasis on structural changes rather than in conflict. A multiple approach to change is indeed appropriate, change itself today being multifaceted, uneven and inter-related. Both approaches acknowledge the futility of treating education apart from other social structures and processes.

Enough has been said to indicate that recurrent education represents a significant break from educational tradition and practice, even though the change may be seen as evolutionary. It embraces, after compulsory basic schooling, both conventional post compulsory education at the upper secondary

and post-secondary levels, on-the-job training of every kind, and adult education in the general or liberal sense in which that term is normally employed in Australia.

A strategy for recurrent education would ... embrace in a common policy framework all the separate systems that offer educational services above the basic or compulsory level, on the understanding that this framework also comprehends compulsory education. The specifically "recurrent" orientation of the policy sets in, however, after the period of compulsory schooling. This passage may remove confusion as to where recurrent education sits within the broader scope of lifelong or permanent education as a concept.

The reaction from one professor to a request for comment on aspects of the idea of recurrent education, briefly explained, illustrates the need to spell out fully what is meant :

> The educationists are at it again : invent a new title and a new gimmick and they set up committees to try and organise people, in fact they do anything but try and teach. Recurrent education seems just to be a new title for various forms of refresher courses in which people in later life bring themselves up to date ... I would point out that (my Department) has been involved in refresher courses for ... about the last 20 years ...

Such resentment towards educationists is not uncommon in Australia, and suggests one of the problems confronting any attempt to introduce universities to the idea. The extract also illustrates a common tendency, faced with the concept, to dismiss it as merely a new term for what has been done for years. Thus the Director of Technical Education for one of the Australian States commented :

> recurrent education is the life blood of technical education in Australia. You will find that the technical college system throughout Australia has been providing education for adults ... ever since the colleges were established way back in the mid 1800s.

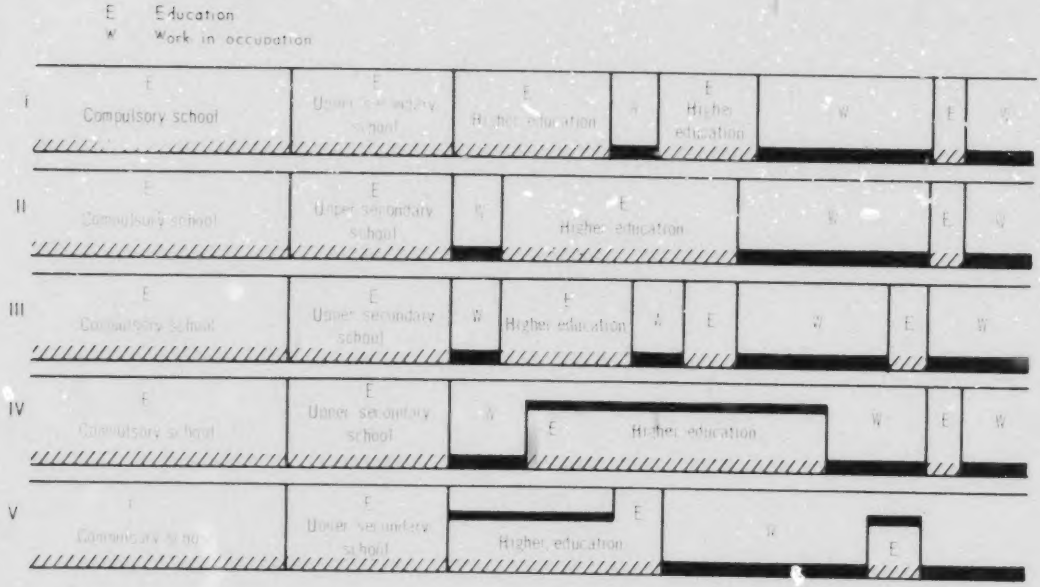
Another correspondent suggested, with much more reason, that recurrent education is "simply a new term for 'continuing education' or 'l'éducation permanente'"; the sense in which this is true is suggested above. (In a later letter he expressed unease springing from a feeling "that the concept of recurrent education springs largely from an instrumental view that will lead it almost inevitably to become so closely work-related as to reduce even further the possibilities of liberal education".) (Bentley, 1973). By contrast, the author of an analysis of the relation between professional institutes and tertiary educational institutions referred to refresher-type

activities such as workshops, conferences and re-training programmes as "post-educational". Very few correspondents approached on the subject referred explicitly to OECD documents or fully appreciated the scope of the term.

Since recurrent education can be interpreted variously, among those aware of the term, I reproduce from Bengtsson a figure showing some possible models for recurrent education (Figure 1).

Figure 1

SOME POSSIBLE MODELS FOR RECURRENT EDUCATION




Model I

Higher education continues directly from upper secondary school. A first period of higher education is followed by work in an occupation, after which the higher education is completed. After some years in an occupation, a brief educational period follows, consisting perhaps of a refresher or upgrading course with some specialisation.

Model II

From upper secondary school direct to an occupation, after a period in which higher education is completed in one sequence. Refresher or upgrading courses are offered sometime after return to the occupation.

Model III

Periods of occupational work both after upper secondary school and between periods of higher education. Refresher or upgrading course, later, after some years in an occupation.

Model IV

Part-time higher educational studies concurrent with an occupation. These begin after a period of occupational work following upper secondary school. Refresher or upgrading course after some years in an occupation.

Model V

Part-time higher education starts concurrently with occupational work immediately after upper secondary school. Final period of higher education is full-time. A later refresher or upgrading course may be taken on a part-time basis.

Bengtsson found two different interpretations of the term, one seeing it primarily as second chance education for adults; "implicitly or explicitly, it takes the present system of youth education for granted and does not anticipate any profound change in it." The second, much more radical, interpretation, sees it as a strategy to change the present post-compulsory system "into something that will provide an alternation between work and study after the years at school". The second of these models has found favour in Sweden, and it is the position from which this report on Australia is written. Clearly it is the more provocative position, since, for example, it raises questions for every college and university department and cannot be hived off as the exclusive concern of an adult or continuing education unit.

## 1.3 CHECKLIST OF BASIC PRINCIPLES

The OECD analysis quoted in 1.2 provides a checklist of basic principles guiding the elaboration of the main features of a recurrent education system, as follows :

a) the last years of compulsory education should provide a curriculum that gives to each pupil a real choice between further study and work;

b) access to post-compulsory education should be guaranteed at any time after leaving compulsory schooling;
c) distribution of facilities should be such as to make education available to all individuals, wherever and whenever they need it;
d) work and other social experience should be regarded as a basic element in admission rules and curricular design;
e) it should be possible and important to pursue any career in an intermittent way, meaning an alternation between study and work;
f) curricular design and content and teaching methodology should be designed in cooperation with the different interest groups involved (students, teachers, administrators, etc.) and adapted to the interests and motivation of different age and social groups;
g) degrees and certificates should not be looked upon as an "end result" of an educational career but rather as steps and guides towards a process of lifelong education and lifelong career and personality development; and
h) on completion of compulsory school each individual should be given a legal right to periods of educational leave of absence without risking the loss of his job and social security.

An immediate Australian reaction to this list must be that it bears little resemblance, as an integrated system of principles, to what happens today. On the other hand examples can be found in one place or another, in some instances on an increasing scale, for the practice of most of them. Part-time and external study for degrees has long been a significant element, and even today the part-time proportion remains relatively high. This, coupled with Australia's history of low unemployment, has contributed to making university education effectively more open than European systems, and also than the North American system, where pressure for full-time straight-through education is exacerbated by employment difficulties and effectively militates against openness. There are opportunities for the adult, given determination, to compensate for lack of success in youth education. At the same time one cannot argue that there is yet official support for recurrent education as an integrating principle for modifying the education system.

There is no report yet resembling Ontario's The Learning Society; although Learning To Be is making an impact in the common rooms and seminar rooms of Schools of Education, and perhaps also of State Education Departments, such ideas have yet to influence policy and practice. There is perhaps just now a take-off in vision for Australian education in unofficial circles and a much more cautious shift in official awareness, but this has

not yet gone beyond the partial arousing of consciousness. At the same time accelerating change, which affects Australia as much as any other contemporary society, compels or facilitates more fundamental questioning than has been common hitherto.

The OECD analysis, in listing the principles quoted above, indicated that the list was not exhaustive and that all principles must apply; one or two principles alone give only partial answers to a "wholesale problem", lifting "only some of the constraints in an overall individual and social situation". Other elements (rather than principles) to which attention is drawn in this report include : tendencies to reduce the polarisation between vocational and general or liberal education; professional exchange between those concerned with the education of different groups of post-school students working towards different objectives (adult educators, industrial trainers etc.); recognition of on-the-job study as part of recurrent education; dialogue between educational institutions and both employers and professional institutes or associations; acknowledgement of the special needs and interests of adult learners and a shift from subject-based study; consideration of manpower policies and problems in a recurrent education context; and application of educational resources towards fostering more educative, learning environments in other-than-educational institutions, especially places of work. (The OECD analysis anticipates "much more intense interaction with society at large", a system of recurrent education affecting the organisation of work and leisure.)

While adhering to the understanding of recurrent education sketched above, this report takes the closer articulation and interaction between education and society to mean mutual interpenetration between educational and other institutions, including efforts to modify work experience so that it generates more learning opportunities from which people may withdraw from time to time for renewed spells of education. The report is thus placed in a socio-philosophical context favouring active participative citizenship, (an intelligent interpretation of) equality of educational opportunity which emphasises accessibility, reduction in alienation, proper appreciation for authority rather than uncritical acceptance of "expertise", and a practical recognition of and respect for experience in oneself and others.

## 1.4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The data for this report were drawn from two sources. The author's work exposes him to thought and discussion of issues embraced by recurrent education among interest groups in the public and private sectors, both educational and other. This exposure, informed by a reading of reports and

other papers on educational thought and policy, provided much of the material. It was supplemented by the replies to a circular letter to some 500 individuals or organisations thought to have some interest in or responsibility for some aspect of recurrent education. Approximately a hundred replies to this letter yielded information and comment from professional associations, public service departments, both education and other, educational institutions (mostly colleges and universities) and persons concerned with the study of education. These views and attitudes, whether or not separately identified, inform the analysis which follows. Several persons, and in particular Professor P. Karmel, read and commented on the first draft of this report, thereby assisting with the elimination of a number of inaccuracies and misleading emphases.

## 2. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

### 2.1 OBJECTIVE FEATURES

Although geographically large, and faced with problems of internal distance and communication which make some people very remote from centres of population and services, Australia is a small country in population. As a European society it is also very young, in parts still almost a frontier society in which mineral findings are opening up new areas, and a society remote from those to which it is historically and culturally close, though less remote now through satellite communication and cheaper and more rapid air transport than a few years ago.

Australia is among the world's most urbanised societies, despite its large size and the remoteness of some pockets of population; a very high proportion of its people are crowded into the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong and the Melbourne metropolitan areas and a few other cities around its coasts. It is still a major net importer of people and immigration remains a significant government function; recently the emphasis has shifted somewhat from immigration to integration, as the policy of massive immigration has come under scrutiny. Although the majority of migrants since the Second World War are from Britain and Europe, increasing proportions now come from other areas such as Turkey and South America. Immigration from Asia now occurs on a small and cautious scale as Australia comes to acknowledge its Asian location and probable future, as well as its European origins.

Much of its present capital comes from overseas as well as its people. This has been blamed for the rather low level of research and development effort in Australian industry, much of which relies rather on the research and development efforts of larger overseas parent companies. On the other hand the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) is a substantial government research and development enterprise. Like many industrialised and developing societies Australia has suffered a periodic rural depression and rural depopulation in recent years; many marginal farmers have been displaced and some two years ago the Department of Labour (and National Service as it then was) introduced a small-scale scheme for retraining displaced farmers and others.

Politically Australia is a federation of six States which remain jealous of their rights and traditions. The central Government (called until mid-1973 Commonwealth but thenceforth simply Australian) has to tread cautiously to avoid offending States-right sensitivities and attracting charges of centralism. None the less, there has been a tendency for more power or influence to be gathered into the Federal Government in many spheres, including education, a tendency assisted by Federal revenue-collection and the States' necessity to supplement their income as suppliants of the Canberra Government. Australia became a member of OECD only in June 1971, reflecting a gradual change in outlook within the country.

## 2.2 VALUES AND ORIENTATION

Australia is often likened, along with New Zealand, to the Scandinavian countries, partly because of its status as a European country, small in population and peripheral to Western economic and political power. A likeness has been seen also in terms of political and social philosophy; it seems that the Australasian countries shared with the Scandinavian a sense of direction and purpose, as in social welfare legislation, at the beginning of the century, which tended to fade later. Until very recently Australia has been essentially derivative upon and somewhat obeisant to both Britain and the United States, in cultural as well as political and economic matters. Its foreign policy has reflected this relationship, as has its attitude to social welfare legislation and education.

A change, apparent in very recent years, was displayed and accelerated by a change of government at the end of 1972. After over twenty years of government by the more conservative and laissez-faire Liberal-Country Party coalition, the Labor Party came into office (at about the same time as its New Zealand counterpart). Many trends visible in the last years of the

previous Government were accentuated, and a period of intense activity ensued among Federal politicians and the Federal Public Service. The change of Government perhaps crystallised a change of mood in the society towards more confident assertion of a distinct national destiny and direction. Several foreign policy initiatives symbolised this (notably withdrawal from the Vietnam War and the recognition of China) together with some related internal decisions, for example to abolish national service and rename the Department concerned simply as the Department of Labour. Among new Commonwealth Departments were a Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD), a separate Department of the Environment, and a separate Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Science was detached from Education to become a separate Department.

The change in political power to a party more committed to planning and social welfare accelerated changes already under way less obtrusively. Although the results cannot as yet be described with confidence, they suggest a more independent stance by Australia vis-à-vis both the British Commonwealth and the United States, and a more positive orientation towards Asia. With this goes a nationalism which takes the form of challenging substantial foreign ownership and investment in Australia.

A more positive planning approach is emerging towards the country's natural resources, at the risk of offending the sensitivities of the different States (the larger of which have Liberal-Country Party Governments); this includes attempts at regional planning, decentralisation, and resistance to environmental degradation. Initiatives have been planned in several areas of social welfare, among them a National Hospitals and Health Services Commission, a Poverty Commission, and a Social Welfare Commission. In the field of education Commissions are being planned for Schools, for Pre-Schools, and for Technical and Further Education. The Universities Commission, at the request of the Government, has established a Committee to inquire into an Open University for Australia.

1973 has thus been a year of considerable political activity in Australia, mirroring a shift in mood in the society which produced the change of Government in December 1972. The mood involves commitment to change and an attempt to plan for it. Symbolically, the executive head of Volvo, and Alvin Toffler, author of Future Schock, both visited Australia during the year; more attention has been paid to Scandinavian experience, for example by the Minister and the Department of Labour. The central government is more planning - and future-oriented than its predecessor. Despite a public opinion swing against the governing party, 1973 will probably mark a major shift in Australian identity and purpose in the directions sketched above. This means that a report on recurrent education in Australia, which must

be largely speculative about future trends, differs from what might have been written twelve months ago, and may itself rapidly become out of date.

## 3. THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

### 3.1 SCHOOL EDUCATION

Formal education in Australia at the school level is the responsibility of State Departments of Education which have traditionally been highly centralised, though there have been recent trends in some States towards devolution of responsibility to regions and schools (Karmel 1971). There is also a substantial and well-established private school system, varying as a proportion of all schooling between States. Although private education has long been a bone of political and ideological contention it is clear that Australia will for the foreseeable future continue to have a bipartite system of schooling. The Labor Government, though unwilling to continue the previous level of support to high fee schools, is not willing directly to confront or seek to abolish private education.

The Australian Government is acquiring an increasing influence over schooling through its system of grants which supplement the educational expenditure of the States. This influence, already more marked in recent years with the growth of a full Department of Education (and Science, until the Government changed) may be expected further to increase as the proposed Schools Commission comes into being and makes its influence felt; its grants are intended, by supplementing the level of spending of the States and non-government authorities, to enhance the quality of education, while the States will be required, to attract this additional support, to continue their present levels of spending on education. The Australian Government has direct responsibility for education in the Australian Capital and Northern Territories, and can use these somewhat as laboratories and showplaces to force the pace of educational innovation elsewhere. Nevertheless it is not possible for the Australian Government to impose a strategy for educational change, such as might be implied by the concept of recurrent education, on the different formal school systems of Australia.

Turning to the area most relevant to recurrent education, retention rates beyond compulsory school age have long been rising, and there is no sign of a change in this trend, despite some sense of crisis in secondary

schooling, and some experimentation with less authoritarian, more open approaches to secondary education, as a response to (real or imagined) hostility or alienation among high school students. In some places alternative forms of post-compulsory secondary education have been introduced, notably the matriculation colleges in Tasmania. In a survey commissioned by the Federal Department of Education on secondary schooling in the Australian Capital Territory (Campbell 1973) junior colleges were recommended for these later years of secondary schooling; although there have been local experiments, the normal pattern is for two years of study to follow the school leaving certificate, leading to matriculation to university or for entry to other tertiary level courses. A few older persons return to study in high schools in some places, but they are as yet the exception. Generally adults wishing to take matriculation and other school-level subjects for credit go to evening colleges, which means an administrative arrangement to open selected high schools for such study at night. Because of size and distance, Australia has perhaps better developed correspondence arrangements, both government and private, than many comparable countries.

## 3.2 TERTIARY EDUCATION

Although the proportion of matriculants going on to universities is not rising as fast as rising retention through the final years of high school, the proportion of the population attending university is higher than in Britain, on which Australian education was largely modelled. Three new universities are being planned in addition to the eighteen already in being, but the major expansion in tertiary education is in the non-university tertiary sector of colleges of advanced education. Advanced education is intended to provide a more vocationally oriented alternative to university education, more responsive to the changing demands of the economy and society; although such an alternative system has been developed in many countries the form and timing of the development in Australia again suggest emulation of British experience. The college sector, which is coming to embrace teachers' colleges and other specialist tertiary level training institutions already in existence (e.g. para-medical) is now supported at the federal level by an Australian Commission on Advanced Education (formerly an Advisory Committee) which parallels the federal Universities Commission and makes grants for the same triennial periods.

Most States now have co-ordinating or planning machinery (for instance the New South Wales Higher Education Authority) for tertiary education, but allocation of funds is passing to the Australian Government,

which is taking over full financial responsibility for universities, and also abolishing fees to universities and colleges, from 1974. The influence which the Central Government, through its Commissions, can exert, is however limited by the tradition of autonomy, more particularly in the university sector. The teachers' colleges until recently came under the direct control of State Education Departments but are now transferring to the non-university tertiary sector as similarly independent institutions.

Concern for the geographically isolated has assisted Australia to lead the world in external studies provision for many years; two universities, Queensland and New England (in Northern New South Wales) have pioneered this work. More recently Macquarie, a new university in Sydney, has developed external studies in science and is to extend this to law in 1975. The Western Australian Institute of Technology has also developed sophisticated provision for tertiary teaching at a distance, and the South Australia Institute of Technology has a firm commitment to external teaching. There are some 1,600 external students of teachers colleges in South Australia.

In addition there is a strong tradition for part-time study in most Australian universities, which tend to recruit largely on a non-residential basis in the major centres of population. There is however also pressure to reduce the proportion of part-time, and so of mature age, students and move towards a predominantly school-leaving clientele. The Australian National University, which at the undergraduate level has always catered for a significant proportion of part-time Commonwealth public servants, provides an example. The same trend is visible, if less marked, among institutes of technology which have acquired college of advanced education status and aspire to university conditions of teaching and study. It is possible to discern some contrary trends and pressures very recently, which favour rather than run counter to the concept of recurrent education (see below, 6).

## 3.3 TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The formal system of education also includes technical education, principally for those immediately above the age for compulsory schooling but open also to adults of all ages. In two States this is administered by a separate Department, elsewhere by a section of the general Education Department. One of these two, New South Wales, has had a Technical Education Department, now reported to be widening to embrace also Further Education, since 1949; the other Department, in South Australia, was set up as a new

Department of Further Education (replacing the Division of Technical Education) in 1972.

Technical education has long been regarded by its practitioners and their employers as the neglected area of education. This feeling has come to be more widely shared with the realisation that, while higher education has expanded more rapidly than employer demands and graduate job expectations have adjusted to the change, "middle level" technician training is producing too few rather than too many qualified people. The phenomenon is familiar to many countries and is complicated by status considerations. The Australian Government in 1973 set up a Technical and Further Education Committee which is intended to become a full Commission and to follow the proposed Schools Commission in supplementing existing States expenditure on technical education. Because of the established suspicions towards centralist tendencies in the States this Committee may have to tread cautiously and balance the desire to speculate imaginatively against the relative security of recommending narrowly to increase spending within the existing structure.

The role of the technical colleges and the scope of further education as defined for the Committee is at present unclear. The colleges tend to be concerned with apprenticeship, craft and technician training, and there is a tendency for the larger colleges to move into more advanced work as well as to diversify and to devise courses of training in newly emerging professions and trades. They also teach for other examinations, notably for the various public service systems, and offer a variable amount of non-vocational and non-credit instruction, usually mainly in the hobby and craft areas. Some also teach general (matriculation) subjects, thus "competing" with evening colleges of the (general) education system for that State.

In South Australia, adult education tends to go on under the same roof and administration as technical, in line with the policy which created a single Department of Further Education, and it is intended that where practicable adult education and technical colleges should become combined institutions (Bone 1972). In the Australian Capital Territory recently it was decided that the Technical College, a large and successful institution which is expanding rapidly to serve an expanding and diversifying population, should stay outside the general education system which is transferring from New South Wales, kept apart from the possibility of junior colleges, and considered by a separate ad hoc committee (Working Party, Campbell, 1973).

Technical education is perhaps in more rapid transition than any

other part of the formal education system, and it is unwise to generalise across States or over any period of time about the scope and direction of change. The Committee established to become a Commission in this area was apparently widened, from its first conception, to embrace further education, which is defined as including post school education other than that supported through the Universities and Advanced Education Commissions, in institutions administered or maintained by a government education authority, excluding training which takes place within industry. This straddles the rough division often drawn between formal and informal education, and it remains to be seen how much of the latter the Committee attempts to embrace. It is here, above all, that an appreciation of the concept of recurrent education could illuminate policy initiatives at a decisive time of change.

## 3.4 INFORMAL EDUCATION

Turning to informal education, Australia has as diverse a patchwork of provision for adult education as most comparable societies. Voluntary bodies and statutory authorities, along with university departments, on an apparently random basis explicable in terms of historical chance rather than rationally planned provision in response to needs, make provision through often very substantial programs of classes and other courses. Most are explicitly non-vocational, non-credit (general or liberal) courses of an intellectual and/or recreational kind, though some provision is made for professionally oriented programmes, or for teaching towards external examinations. Some provision is for special groups; much is open to all who wish to enrol. The trend in some university departments of adult/continuing education, and in colleges of advanced education moving into this field of provision, is to lay particular stress on short professional refresher or diversification courses, not however for formal credit, where the contract may be with the employer organisation rather than with randomly recruited individuals. The most recent reports of both tertiary Commissions point in this direction.

Further out from formal educational institutions, the problem of definition and exclusion/inclusion becomes more difficult as one moves into the area of interest groups, leisure clubs and associations, a few of which are members of the Australian Association of Adult Education. Semantic differences about adult education reflect philosophical differences as to what constitutes education; here perhaps proponents of recurrent education might part company with the proponents of wider lifelong education and the

learning society who would draw under their definition social institutions and organisations of all kinds. In Australia the definition tends to be cautious and conventional among most educationists. An official view of the extent of further education must await the report of the Technical and Further Education Committee.

## 3.5 IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

As the terms of reference of that Committee suggest, the massive programmes of in-service education, training or re-orientation conducted by professional and trade associations, through seminars, conferences, scientific meetings etc., and by organisations in the public and private sectors, both federal and State Public Service Departments and (the larger) organisations of industry and commerce, are seldom included in discussion and thought about education in Australia.

There have been some attempts at closer relations on a regular or occasional basis between educational institutions and employing organisations and/or professional bodies, but most such exchange tends to be ritualised through familiar formal and informal channels (clubs, university and college councils, etc.). It is still unusual to hear of educational institutions engaging employer and professional organisations in their planning strategies on a regular and equal basis. Conversely, public and private organisations conducting their own training programmes will frequently draw on visiting lecturers from educational institutions but rarely engage them in strategic or specific educational planning about the refresher and continuing education of their members. The recent (1971) creation and marked success of an Australian Institute of Training and Development expresses the growing significance and confidence of training establishments and personnel. Significantly this is a separate professional association, though connected with the Australian Association of Adult Education through particular individuals; it has virtually no (other) ties with the formal education system. In December 1973 a three-man committee was appointed by the Australian Government to inquire into retraining needs in Australia.

All in all, in-service and refresher education is expanding rapidly in Australia and is accorded growing importance in many quarters, both large employer organisations and professional associations. But it remains as yet haphazard and patchwork, unrelated in most cases to the content and process of pre-service professional preparation. While continuing education has thus acquired some public notice and increasing support in very recent

years, the formal and informal elements in Australian education do not constitute anything approaching a planned or deliberately conceived system. Although many elements contributory to a system of recurrent education may be isolated out of what is described above, in no sense can it be described as a system of recurrent education. Nor is there any very obvious general attempt to bridge the gaps between general, professional, technical education, and refresher education, or between education and other parts of the social system, particularly work.

## 4. OFFICIAL VIEWS AND POLICIES

### 4.1 REVIEW AGAINST CHECKLIST OF BASIC PRINCIPLES

There is no official commitment to a policy or strategy of recurrent education in Australia although official statements and initiatives have included component elements. The analysis in section 3 set alongside the checklist from OECD (1.3) makes this clear.

#### 4.1.1. Real choice following compulsory education

Although compulsory (government) education at the secondary level is comprehensive rather than segregated administratively, and is theoretically accessible equally to all pupils, it is largely oriented towards university and matriculation requirements at the post-compulsory level, with some early specialization. "Real choice" means little more than the opportunity to stay on if demonstrated ability and parental aspirations encourage this, or to leave for an age-related apprenticeship which marks a clean break from general education. Experience of the world beyond the school in late compulsory years is generally restricted to occasional visits. The curriculum is almost entirely self-contained and encapsulated within schooling. There is little evidence of general reappraisal of this situation at an official policy level.

#### 4.1.2. Subsequent access

There is no formal guarantee of access to post-compulsory education at any time after leaving school at fifteen, but most persons other than in very remote areas have access in theory to some system of general education provision, through the State Education Departments' evening college or class

arrangements. These provide the opportunity for a second attempt at the main general education subjects, usually taught as in the last years of high school by the same teachers. Some schools take adults into normal classes but there are economic problems for working men and women who lose their source of income by studying full-time. Community college arrangements as well as paid study leave would be necessary to make this theoretical entitlement a practicality.

4.1.3. Availability of education to all

It will never be possible to give all Australian citizens equal access to facilities, for reasons of remoteness, but developing experience of remote area provision by means of correspondence and other special assistance goes some way to reducing this handicap. Physical availability of facilities does not answer the more intransigent problem of de facto inaccessibility to those whose social and school experience sets them against education. There appears however to have developed of late wider practical understanding of the meaning of availability of education to all, and a concern in policy-making to reduce socio-economic and cultural as well as geographical disadvantages.

4.1.4 Recognition of other experience

Work and other social experience are scarcely acknowledged in admission rules generally. One can however now find many local and partial exceptions, especially among new institutions and for courses where particular experience is relevant to the subject. Thus Aboriginality is coming to be recognised as a criterion for teacher education in the Aboriginal context. Many tertiary institutions accept as least a few entrants aged 25 years or more who lack formal educational qualifications, the years of work being judged alternative to matriculation when there is good motivation; a few have a real commitment to external and non-matriculant study and students. Curriculum design is probably responding more slowly, locally, to the same awareness of adult needs and potential. It is not possible to find explicit official endorsement of these principles in government-level policy statements, but college-level policy statements in some instances incorporate them.

4.1.5. Intermittent careers

It is extremely difficult to alternate study and work in the pursuit of a career. Most trades and professions require initial training and membership prior to the right to practice. Leave to study means loss of income

and often of security and position in the organisation, as it does for women who leave the public service for child-bearing. Generally it is assumed, in educational planning and in society at large, that education and qualification precede employment and trade/professional practice. There are no official policy commitments which seriously question this. (Some non-government trends in this direction are discussed in section 6.)

4.1.6. Adaptation to learner differences

It is rare, outside the field of traditionally understood adult education, for students to be partners in the choice of curriculum content and of teaching and learning methods; even in adult education the approach is more commonly honoured in the word than in deed. Grass-root initiatives for learning exchanges and collectives are calling forth a little official recognition and response.) Consultation takes place to an increasing extent with special groups, such as Aborigines and migrants, e.g. on a policy for bilingualism in Aboriginal schools. The theory and implementation of such co-operative approaches are little appreciated among educational administrators and theorists.

4.1.7. Qualifications as steps and guides

Official practice and attitudes reinforce the idea that full-time "front-loading" education is the natural and proper model of education. Qualifications are normally completed before regular earning begins, with the exception of the substantial element reading part-time for degrees. Career planning is becoming less uncommon among the larger employing organisations, especially private; sometimes this is participative rather than directive. The articulation of the education system with the social status system places a high premium on initial level of educational attainment. Although no serious challenge to this has yet emerged from educational policy-makers and administrators, it is being questioned from within by some professional associations, for example Royal Colleges of Medicine, but a qualification is still treated as a lifetime licence to practice. Degrees and certificates are not usually seen as related in any way as "steps and guides towards a process of lifelong education and lifelong career and personality development", especially not the latter.

4.1.8. Educational leave

References to the need for paid leave for educational purposes are becoming more common. Education departments are moving towards study leave

for teachers (e.g. one term after seven years) as resources permit. There is some trade union demand for paid educational leave and some Labor Party official support for this. Public servants have the right to limited (e.g. five hours a week) leave for part-time study on full pay. Most public and large private employers will give employees leave for a short period (from one or two days up to a few weeks) for specific courses thought vocationally relevant. There is no legal right to this and it is unrelated to the period of full-time education; or rather, there is a positive relationship, though not a deliberately intended one, between full-time post-compulsory education received and the likelihood of securing educational leave for further study.

## 4.2 MAJOR EDUCATION INQUIRIES AND POLICY STATEMENTS

A review of recent major education inquiries and policy statements confirms the general picture sketched in 4.1.

### 4.2.1. Education in South Australia (Karmel)

The first of these recent significant reports was the 1971 "Karmel Report" Education in South Australia prepared in 1969-70. This very substantial study set out to review the whole educational system of the State in order to determine the most effective use of resources available for education. It spelt out six qualities on which high value was placed : a non-authoritarian approach; concern for the individual child; equality of educational opportunities; diversity of educational institutions; decentralisation of decision-making; and opening up the education system to a variety of ideas.

Although only a State, not a federal, inquiry, it was extremely thorough and comprehensive, and acclaimed as such. Since the Chairman subsequently became both Chairman of the Australian Universities Commission and of its Committee on an Open University, and Chairman of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, and since the values enunciated above closely accord with those expressed by the Labor Party in its election platform, the 1971 Karmel Report is a landmark in Australian educational policy. Many of its recommendations, including autonomy for teachers' colleges and a separate Department of Further Education, were rapidly implemented.

While the Report acknowledged the importance of several elements which would contribute to a system of recurrent education, including full-time study leave from time to time for teachers, and credit towards promotion

for further systematic study by teachers, as well as special efforts to upgrade poorly qualified teachers, there is no general critique of the education system from the recurrent education perspective, and no reference to the lifelong and recurrent perspectives.

The Report discusses raising the age of compulsory school attendance but rejects it on the ground that rising retention rates will render legal changes redundant :

> no useful purpose would be served by obliging pupils to stay unwillingly at school. We think that the accessibility of further education at any later stage in life when people may desire to take advantage of it is a matter of greater importance than a raised school-leaving age ... (p. 198)

On the other hand there is no suggestion that the segregation of school from non-school experience in the later years of compulsory education might be re-examined with a view to seeing what choice the curriculum provides between further study and work (4.1.1.).

No specific recommendation is made about senior high schools for the post-compulsory secondary period, although economic and socio-educational aspects are raised :

> sandwich courses which combined school with periods of employment could be more easily arranged in separate senior high schools. The idea of matriculation courses as a continuous two-year period of study might be encouraged, and the more adult arrangements possible in such a school might make continued schooling more attractive to those not desiring to matriculate ...

The Report rejected the idea of a third year of post-compulsory schooling prior to university as confusing university entry arrangements and pushing up entry requirements to non-university tertiary institutions.

Although the Report resists tendencies to lengthen further full-time education, it is couched entirely within conventional assumptions about the relationship between schooling and work. Thus (p. 284) :

> There has been a steady decline in university part-time studies. We believe that this is to be expected as entry to the universities becomes more competitive and as greater opportunities to enter tertiary education direct from school occur. Moreover, we believe that full-time study is the best form of study at universities ... /On the following page/ : a common reason advanced (for more part-time opportunities) was that employers preferred their employees to join them direct from school and then proceed to study part-time

rather than to join them several years later when they had completed their tertiary education. This we believe to be an out-of-date view. An increasing proportion of young people wish to continue with full-time tertiary education ...

The Report goes on to recognise that a combination of work and study may be a good way to acquire an informed interest in certain courses; and, in some fields, sandwich courses in which practical training is part of the education process are especially important. Accordingly, adequate and convenient facilities for part-time study should be provided. Nevertheless, no central and positive reason is advanced for deferred entry to tertiary and further education, or for part-time study in general.

The Report, probably the most penetrating and comprehensive which Australian education will produce this decade, and signed by the country's most prominent educational administrator, accepts existing assumptions about the timing and nature of schooling, and the relationship which is appropriate between school and work. Education and schooling are not distinguished; the assumptions are largely inimical to those of both recurrent education and the learning society, education being essential preparatory for other, normally subsequent, social roles.

The section on further education accords with this general approach, helpful though it has been to that branch of educational provision in the State. A separate Department was advocated on the grounds that technical and further education were largely a neglected area, that this would allow new perpspectives and co-ordination, and that it would respect the different needs of adult and part-time students :

> Many participants in further education ... are people whose school experience has been neither outstandingly successful nor, in many cases, particularly happy. A separate department ... may emphasise a break in continuity and induce a change in approach that could help the student make a new start, leaving old attitudes behind him.

Another argument was that employers had a more legitimate interest in further/technical than general school education which could be accommodated more easily through a distinct department. Although it is acknowledged that separation could mean divorce from the mainstream of educational thinking and planning at other levels, this argument was outweighed by the others.

In this sense the Report reinforces the academic orientation of general education and approaches the problem of alienation for the unsuccessful through compensation and segmentation. Although the Report reiterates (p. 541) that the education system is inextricably woven into the

fabric of the society in which it operates, it restricts the implication to involvement in advisory bodies and school councils. If one may conceptualise approaches to the need for educational reform as "the learning society-recurrent education-segmentation/compensation", the only major Australian analysis of education in recent years is located towards the latter end of this spectrum.

4.2.2. Labor Party Platform

The Australian Labor Party's 1972 Platform for education asserted that everyone has the right to education, it being the State's obligation to provide "a universal, free, compulsory, secular system of education open to all citizens". Specific proposals initiated or subjected to preliminary inquiry include a pre-school commission, a schools commission, assumption of responsibility for co-ordination and financing of tertiary education, and establishment of an Open University and Open Institutes of Tertiary Education which will accept students whatever their academic qualifications and utilise (various techniques) to provide university and other tertiary educational opportunities uninfluenced by geographic, occupational and academic barriers. The aim of such institutions should be to provide educational opportunities for those who for any reason have not had such opportunities.

The Platform also pledged provision of retraining schemes and allowances (which implied accelerating and building on initiatives already taken) and "grants to the States for further education, including extension services". The Commonwealth would consult with the States and appropriate professional bodies to achieve Australia wide recognition of qualifications. Several elements in the platform accord with the general direction of recurrent education, but they do not constitute a system informed by this general concept.

4.2.3. Address by Minister for Education

The question remains whether the Australian Government appreciates the concept of recurrent education. An address by the Minister for Education (August 1973) at a symposium on science and manpower policy reads very favourably from this perspective. For example :

> ... the impact of technological advancement constantly confronts us with inadequacies in our planning and human needs, including the need to adjust education to enhance skill and dignity ...
> Education to pass examinations is giving way to education of a far

more sophisticated kind. It must relate to life and living through elective courses ...

Increasingly we must provide for a return to education at later stages of life, not just for retraining, but to think through types of problems encountered in life situations. Education must be seen as a lifelong process, no longer confined to the young. People of any age must have access to educational opportunities for the purpose of personal enrichment as much as to overcome earlier social or economic handicap ...

The concept of continuing education, although not new, has seen recent development. The United Kingdom, Canada and the United States are attempting to cope with the demand for access to higher education by people outside the traditional age groups, often those disadvantaged by their socio-economic background ...

The need for opportunities of continuing education in this country has led the Government to ask the Australian Universities Commission to set up an "Open University" Committee ...

The term "open-ness" means lack of rigidity in entry requirements, a wide range of courses and flexibility of content, innovative teaching methods and dispersed locations of learning centres. The demand will come not only from people who have just finished school or broken off studies at secondary or tertiary level, but also from those who closed their text-books for what they thought was the last time up to thirty and even more years ago. The needs and motivations of these groups will differ considerably and will require flexible educational responses in terms of courses, their duration and contents ...

But simply increasing the opportunities for continuing education for everyone who wants to make use of them will not be enough. The labour market will need to adapt itself to these developments and provide the framework in which employees can move more freely out of employment from time to time for educational purposes without loss of seniority, income level and security of tenure ...

There is much involuntary specialisation in secondary education, where future options for courses at tertiary level are often limited by the early direction into educational streams and irrevocable choice of subjects, even in first and second forms ... I believe that this involuntary restriction of further education options needs to be thoroughly researched, with a view to keeping options open as long as possible ... a more general preparation to first degree level will equip the graduate to approach the job market with more realistic and flexible attitudes to job expectations, and will also place the

onus on employers to recognise the potential of broadly educated scientists and perhaps accept more responsibility for their later specialist training ...

We may soon have to consider whether the whole structure of post-secondary education, with its distinct institutional levels and hierarchies of learning, is not in need of transformation and improvement ...

In summing up, the Minister emphasised specific needs :

In the process of continuous education of so many between the ages of 5 and 28 (the latter age was made later and less definite during delivery of the paper and discussion), we need to provide for voluntary breaks in courses - or at least to facilitate them without loss to the student - to enable students to acquire worldly and practical experience.

There must be provision for re-entry into a flexible educational system of people who have encountered problems they need to study or to cope with, or who have realised the need to acquire new skills ...

As a long term consideration we may need to plan the joint use of human and material resources allocated to post-secondary education - a common core of subjects, staff, libraries and facilities.

The contrast between this and the South Australian Report is marked, and probably instructive of the speed at which ideas are developing about educational purposes and systems in Australia. As a scenario for the future this embraces most of the essential elements which go to make up a system of recurrent education rather than compensatory and segmented responses to particular problems. It is interesting that the Karmel Report (1971, p. 297) found it "important to recognise that, to a large degree, job opportunities adjust to the nature of those seeking them" as an argument in favour of increasing the direct school-university intake, since employers would adjust their understandings and expectations of "a graduate". Beazley argues for labour market adaptation to recurrent patterns of education, which implies a much more deliberate and significant change.

There has, then, been explicit recognition and public exposition of recurrent education from the highest level of policy-making in education. Similarly Karmel, in recent public addresses about the education system, has, discussing demands for more equal access to educational opportunity and the costs involved, provided strong arguments for shifting towards a recurrent model (see also Karmel, 1973). We must however distinguish policy commitment from public exploration of possibilities. The paper

quoted above was prefaced by the comment that "there will ... be a fair amount of pure speculation on my part", deliberately to provoke wider thought about the education system. To set it in perspective one has only to read the Minister's major policy statement in Parliament a week later, which, while reviewing the Government's initiatives in education during the year, and emphasising the theme of accessibility, has no suggestion of the recurrent education vision displayed in the science and manpower symposium.

4.2.4. Universities Commission

Australian universities generally make provision for part-time study, and three have developed extensive programmes of external studies. However, there is as yet no commitment to the concept of recurrent education in this sector. Naturally, given the date, the 1964 (Martin) Report on the future of tertiary education in Australia made no suggestion embodying this concept. It referred to the need for refresher courses for such professional groups as agricultural scientists and teachers. Its comment on problems associated with part-time study led to suggestions to reduce the need for such study rather than to remove the difficulties.

The evolving policy of the Universities Commission is contained in its triennial reports; the Fifth Report, in 1972, refers to the years 1973-75. Examination of this document reveals no substantial shift towards a recurrent view of education. The Report views with equanimity the continuing trend towards full-time study (55.8% full-time, 34.5% part-time, 9.7% external in 1962 compared with 67.6%, 25.4% and 7.0% respectively in 1972). It takes as its criterion for availability of tertiary education the number of places available in tertiary institutions as a proportion of the 17-22 year age group. Although this is merely a convenient measure, it does tend to suggest that tertiary education is essentially and properly an activity which follows immediately from secondary schooling. This is reinforced by other calculations which relate numbers of tertiary places to numbers of students completing secondary schooling. The Report makes no reference to the possibility of a break between secondary and tertiary education, despite increasingly common mention of this in public discussion and seminars on education, and despite the behaviour of some universities which are beginning to encourage such a break by allowing deferment of a university place granted on matriculation. The Report discusses employment problems, both of undergraduates whose high expectations are disappointed as their numbers increase, and of doctoral students who can no longer be absorbed by universities and who cannot always find congenial work within

their own specialisms. It looks mainly for attitudinal changes among employers and graduates, but also favours the slow-down which has occurred in the expansion of higher degree enrolments, and the partial shift from research to (master's) coursework degrees. It opposes over-reaction to employment difficulties, favouring both continuing expansion of generalist first degrees and slower expansion in the numbers staying on for higher degrees. There is no suggestion here of recurrent education or any other more positive strategy on the part of universities; it must however be remembered that the role of the Commission is to advise the Government on the financial needs of universities, not to determine their policies. Jealousy would quickly be aroused if the Commission sought more directly to reorient university energies towards recurrence.

The Report does deliberately adopt the term "post-secondary" in lieu of tertiary education (p. 25) as a wider concept which suggests planning in the context of trade, sub-tertiary general, and adult as well as other tertiary education; it notes that further (non-tertiary, post-secondary) education, though developed in technical colleges, is relatively underdeveloped compared e.g. with community colleges in parts of the United States.

Referring to continuing and adult education, or extension, the Report is more positive than an earlier report which sought to terminate all support for university adult education :

> In their submissions, many universities laid emphasis on the need to develop their activities in these fields, particularly in the area of continuing education for the professionals; and a number of universities proposed ambitious programmes of development. The Commission is sympathetic to these aspirations, and believes that the direct costs of activities of this kind should be substantially recovered from the fees charged for the courses offered, and that it is for the universities to decide to what extent they will fund the overheads of such operations from their recurrent funds.

A change in federal-State financial relations is recommended to free up the entrepreneurial activities of universities in this direction, although this has since been rendered obsolete, and its practical effects constraining rather than enabling, with the abolition of all other university fees.

Continuing/refresher education is thus treated quite apart from policy considerations about the purpose and timing of basic formal education. The paragraph quoted above has been interpreted in some places as meaning that all university continuing/refresher education should be

self-financing including (at least after an initial starting period) office costs and salaries of all those involved. Although this is unwarranted, the Report gives no encouragement to the idea that refresher-type students should be credited to the universities' staffing entitlements in calculating staff-student ratios. This leaves such work marginal, and dependent on those with energy to spare from internal teaching and research. As one respondent explained it :

> the main problem is to get financial backing .. The real present need is for recognition by the A.U.C. that such courses are a proper function for a university and that due weight is given for students who are enrolled in such courses. At the present time any summer school or refresher course which we put on and which is not directed towards a degree course does not contribute to the total number of weighted student units of the university ...

Conversation with several Vice-Chancellors has suggested the need to devise some such formula to be agreed with the Commission, before substantial refresher work can be attempted. One university is considering recurrent programmes in the coming (1976-78) triennium, and it remains to be seen what attitude the Commission will take to this proposal if it goes forward :

> as from the beginning of the next triennium it is proposed to introduce pilot programmes ... Short courses of topical, professional interest will be offered to graduates, some for credit but not necessarily so. We have specified graduates since other agencies, including our Department of Extension, are able to provide similar courses for non-graduates ... The programmes will be initiated and staffed by individual Departments and the work associated with such programmes will be part of the normal work-load of the academic staff ...
> Students undertaking such programmes will be considered, in every way, as "normal" students of the University ... unless external co-ordinating and financial bodies require it, I doubt if we will be particularly concerned about identifying certain programmes as "recurrent" and others as "postgraduate diploma" ...
> It is not proposed to appoint staff to academic departments specifically charged with the conduct of recurrent programmes. Rather will the regular staff offer such programmes as demand and interest require. In order to permit this, however, external financing and controlling agencies (especially the Universities Commission) will need to accept "recurrent" students within the normal EFTS (equivalent

full-time student) framework. Staffing of Departments engaged in the pilot projects will then be supplemented in accordance with this formula so that no undue teaching load is imposed on such Departments. We believe that if recurrent education as an on-going activity is to be a success, it should be supported. The alternative is a contractual servicing which would seem to place recurrent education in the category of "optional extra". (McCaig, 1973).

This is where present policy does place it. There is no evidence that the Commission is shifting its ground in line with this or earlier similar proposals (Davies, 1972, Duke, 1972, 2). The Commission's 1973 Report of its Committee on Medical Schools ruled that ...

> The responsibility for continuing education must lie with the individual, so it is reasonable that postgraduate committees and colleges should depend on their members for finance for this aspect of their work. Nevertheless, the administrative costs are considerable, and some government contribution towards overheads may be desirable.

There is some concession here, but it moves only slightly towards encouraging even what Bengtsson identifies as the more limited view of recurrent education (see 1.2. above). Any significant shift will now wait on the report of the University Commission's Committee on an Open University for Australia, appointed at the request of the Federal Minister for Education in 1973. This Committee will submit a draft report to public discussion in 1974 before reporting finally. It therefore remains to be seen whether it will recommend an entirely new university or accrediting body, and what effect it may have on the practices of existing universities. The Fifth Report's only reference to recurrent education (p. 26), identifies it as an interesting overseas development, mention being made of OECD/CERI :

> The implication of this concept is that, while most people have in the past obtained their higher education immediately following their schooling, there is a case in the modern affluent society for encouraging people to think of formal education as a life-long experience and for facilitating movement back and forth between employment and educational institutions. Recurrent education goes beyond the provision of facilities for part-time studies or sandwich courses to a recognition that formal education, whether for vocational or other purposes, may be spread over a life-time rather than concentrated in a relatively short period.

As discussion of the Fifth Report has shown, the concept plays no part in the Commission's recommendations. The reference to recurrent education is not drawn together with sections on continuing education, on numbers entering universities from school, etc., which sections ignore or run counter to the recurrent perspective.

4.2.5. Commission on Advanced Education

The Australian Commission on Advanced Education, in its Report for the same (1973-75) triennium, is more positive about continuing education. Referring to the difficulty facing some university graduates in finding suitable employment, and to OECD discussion of the problem, common to many countries, of a "surplus" of tertiary-qualified persons and a shortfall in particular areas, the Third Report suggests that :

> this problem can to some extent be attacked by a flexibility in course structure, by sandwich and part-time courses and by continuing education. This latter means that opportunities for further study could be offered to people with basic training in a specific area so that their knowledge can be brought up-to-date and new specific skills acquired which will enable them to change their employment area. (p. 5).

Later (p.94) the Report specifically favours continuing education :

> To ensure that the community has a guarantee of high professional standards the Commission feels justified in regarding education as a life-long activity, and is convinced that continuing education is essential for members of professions if they are to continually update that body of knowledge they received in their pre-service education. For this reason we believe that colleges should be more concerned with making provision, by means of devices such as week-end seminars and retraining sessions, for continuing education, than with lengthening existing courses.

These extracts read more favourably towards recurrent education than the comparable passages in the Universities Report; also, the Advanced Education Commission is opposed to preferring full-time over part-time study, as well as against lengthening existing courses. One must however recognize both the pressure on and within colleges to become more like universities, and the limitations on the Commission's ability, given its role, to resist this tendency. On the other hand, also, the Commission says nothing about the possibility of a break before coming up from school, and its view of the colleges' role in this regard seems to be narrowly

refresher continuing rather than more ambitiously for recurrent education. Moreover, nothing is said about the financing of continuing education, and other signs are that the two tertiary commissions, even if they do remain separate, will consult closely on common matters of policy. It is therefore unlikely that continuing education will receive financial encouragement or be allowed to enter staff-student calculations unless the Universities Commission makes the same concession.

The Chairman of the Advanced Education Commission recognises that fundamental changes in attitude at the post-secondary "and possibly even secondary" levels will be necessary to implement the concept (Swanson, 1973). He recognises that only minor concessions are made by institutions to the normal matriculation pattern, and that full-time study tends to be regarded as the norm. He calls attention to employers' difficulties with a recurrent education model, given present conditions and arrangements. His prediction is that the well-educated middle classes will generate the main demand for recurrent education unless a desire for further education can be fostered in the early school leaver. There is also the problem that age would have to cease to be a bar to suitable employment, if mature study for qualifications became commoner. The Chairman concludes :

> In the long term, recurrent education would seem to make better use of educational resources. The wider variety of age groups and experience would probably be beneficial to those undertaking formal tertiary studies while the more mature selection of courses should lead to reduced failure rates. As well as increasing educational satisfaction recurrent education should enable people to find increased job satisfaction through allowing them greater flexibility of employment.

At present recurrent education looks more likely to find support in the Advanced Education than the Universities sector of tertiary education, and this is reflected in the greater involvement with employer institutions and professional associations which characterises most colleges, as well as their provision of more part-time, sandwich and refresher courses than is typical of the universities. However, most of the colleges, like the universities, are as yet little influenced by the perspective of recurrent education, and natural inclinations tend to militate against such a reformulation of role and objectives in favour of a stance more like that of the universities.

### 4.2.6. Schools Commission

The report of the interim committee for the Schools Commission, Schools in Australia, was limited to recommending "in terms of structures

which exist and which it has little direct power to modify ... The on-going nature of all social institutions brings the past into the present, and limits present options and future directions". The Report therefore speculated little on future directions, though it did recommend a fund ($ 6 million for 1974-75) to support projects "of such a kind as to promote change at school, systemic and national levels". The Report places value on devolution of responsibility, equality (including special efforts for the disadvantaged), diversity rather than centralised manipulation of change, both public and private schooling, and community involvement; "unless our conception of education broadens to enable schools to forge closer links with other socialising agencies, the possibility of providing equal life chances for children from all types of social backgrounds is severely limited".

The Report is cautious in approaching a national policy for schools, eschewing a centralised master plan for change; it concentrates on educational disadvantage and its relationship with socio-economic disadvantage. A chapter on teacher development involving in-service programmes and teacher-initiated Education Centres acknowledges the importance of updating for the teaching profession. One page (p. 15) comments on the concept of recurrent education, asserting the belief that :

> every member of society has an entitlement to a period of education at public expense, and (that) those who leave school early have a claim which they should be able to take out at a later date. It prefers extended possibilities of recurrent education to a lengthening period of compulsory schooling ... The level of basic skills established while at school needs to be high enough to enable the individual to return at a later stage when he feels more confident about his interests and aspirations. The Committee endorses the idea that, having reached this level, it should be accepted as normal practice for people to enter the work force and to resume their studies in response to their felt vocational or personal needs at a later date.

The Report recognizes the attraction of the recurrent concept as an extended application of the notion of equality of opportunity, and its particular attraction for women :

> The capacity for learning of self-directed and highly motivated adult students is well known, and suggests that individual and social benefits would flow from the postponement of further education for many students until after a period of work experience. The concept of lifelong education covers all types of post-school education and envisages a

withdrawing of people from the workforce from time to time in some cases. It embraces all the formal and informal ways in which the community provides opportunities to its members to partake in activities considered valuable ... Education might then be seen as being less a separate compartment of life and more an aspect of the quality of life itself.

This goes well beyond the earlier (South Australian) education report under the same chairman, in identifying and endorsing the principle of recurrent and lifelong education and its ramifications for the nature of education. Not surprisingly, given the Committee's brief, no mention of these ideas and this belief appears among the specific recommendations.

4.2.7. Other aspects

Discussion has concentrated on federal policy statements since the South Australian report of 1971. There are additionally eight State departments of education (including technical and further education) which vary in orientation and flexibility, within the framework of Australian society and the emerging direction from the federal government.

Perhaps the most interesting from the recurrent education perspective, the Technical and Further Education Commission, is yet to be legally constituted. Its preparatory Committee will report in 1974. Since it must grasp the thistle of defining or delineating further education in some way, this body may do more to advance discussion of recurrent education than the three earlier commissions, especially as technical education suffers from the tendency of secondary schools to socialise their students towards tertiary education at cost both to the less academically oriented students and to the needs of the economy for middle level technicians.

The Technical and Further Education Committee has before it various submissions suggesting a recurrent or lifelong perspective in approaching its task. It cannot adequately come to terms even with the work and future of technical colleges in the Australian situation without examining the transition from compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education to non-tertiary further education. This includes the degree of choice which schools present to students, both by curriculum design and by attitudes to further education instilled in the secondary school years. On the one hand it thus has an opportunity to think and express itself very widely about lifelong education, both formal and informal, professional and general. On the other hand it will be under pressure to attend narrowly and specifically to the financial needs of vocational and trade-related technical education, traditionally conceived.

There is available little public material which examines nationally trade training and the relations between technical education, on the one hand, and in-service training, apprenticeship and employment on the other. The main exception is the papers and reports from a national conference on training for industry and commerce in 1971 (Department of Labour and National Service) which, though oriented mainly to training for craftsmen, technicians, operatives and supervisors and to the relationship between technical college training, on-the-job training or its absence, and employer needs, also raised at times wider questions of continuing education, flexibility for retraining, and the relation between ad ptability and job satisfaction (c.f. Swanson in 4.2.5.).

Although this report does not record and appraise the policy orientations of the different States, they do not necessarily lag behind federal thinking. Victoria has a reputation for experimental work especially in its technical high schools which may encourage students to take a more active part in defining their own learning, perhaps including choice as between uninterrupted study and some other pattern of study and work when secondary schooling is complete, or earlier.

The South Australian Department of Further Education, partly because it is very new, is exploring the meaning of continuing education and attempting to draw together non-vocational and vocational training and education for post-school persons of whatever age. One difficulty, as a proponent of recurrent education, is that its work is administratively distinct from post-compulsory secondary education, which may make it less easy to develop the community college as an instrument for greater choice and flexibility at the senior high school and adult levels.

In summary, there is not yet any official Australian commitment to recurrent education, nor any public study like Ontario's Learning Society or the New Zealand Unesco Commission report on Lifelong Education. There is however recently increasing comprehension and acknowledgement of the concept. The Faure Report Learning To Be is reported to be attracting considerable attention both at official (Federal and State) levels, and at a "grass-roots" level, for example among teachers. Probably this freeing up of attitudes to a challenging and foreign idea is part of the shift in national mood sketched in section 2 of the report. In the words of one senior educationist :

> Very little has been written on the concept of recurrent education as such in Australia, although the phrase is finding its way into the educational political forums. I doubt whether the OECD/CERI documents and publications on the subject have had a very wide circulation or

impact as yet ... I suspect that many of the separate developments which may be grouped under the broad title of recurrent education are taking place fairly much in isolation, as response to particular needs and circumstances. (Dunn, S.S., 1973).

An official view from the Australian Department of Education is that :

it is clear that Australian universities, colleges of advanced education and, of course, to an even greater extent, schools, are primarily concerned with education of young people who have yet to commence employment. This is not to discount the quite substantial provision of education for adults which is undertaken by tertiary institutions and education departments. Nor do I consider that schools and tertiary institutions should change their primary purpose. Even if the need for lifelong education is given greater recognition it seems self-evident that the substantial part of a nation's formal education services will need to be provided for young people. (Jones, 1973).

## 5. TOWARDS RECURRENT EDUCATION ? - TRENDS AND IDEAS WITHIN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this section a number of particular areas are examined, together with more general trends and speculations about social changes conducive to the progressive re- onceptualisation and gradual restructuring of educational provision in Australia towards recurrent education.

There is more widespread consideration of such matters now than in recent years, for reasons suggested in the second part of this report. Although the two reports commissioned by the present Government most relevant to this theme have yet to be presented, these inquiries into an open university and into technical and further education contribute to public questioning of the values and direction of Australian society and education.

One decision already taken is likely to facilitate a shift towards recurrent education in the tertiary sector generally. The Federal Government has introduced a living allowance of up to $ 1,300, free of tax. While this is means-tested on parental income, a person living independently for two years is eligible on his or her own income only. This makes it possible, for example, to work full-time for two years after school away from home, then work part-time while studying and still attract the maximum allowance.

## 5.1 SOME UNIVERSITY ILLUSTRATIONS

5.1.1.

Five universities are cited to provide examples of trends and attitudes. A sixth was mentioned in 4.2.4. Two Victorian universities have this year established centres or units for continuing education. Neither sees this as part of a wider shift towards recurrent education, although Melbourne University considers some of the plans to be "consistent with the concepts of recurrent education. Our Office for Continuing Education will be concerned with co-ordinating and developing courses and activities which do not lead to a degree. In addition to refresher courses, extension courses of a more general interest ... will be offered." Until this phase of development is established "it is unlikely that we can give extensive consideration to recurrent education as such". (Poynter, 1973).

5.1.2.

Whereas Melbourne, an old University in the heart of the city, is constrained by the legacy of its history, Monash University has been in existence only a decade. Its plans for continuing education :

> are based more upon a particular view of the relationship between the University and its surrounding community - a belief that the University has a responsibility to promote the use of its particular resources and expertise in meeting the educational needs of adults - than upon any wide-ranging conceptual view of total educational needs at all levels throughout the community (Butchart, 1973).

The areas of provision planned are : refresher-type non-credit courses for well qualified persons; seminars and conferences on important issues; collaboration with providing bodies and educational research bodies having related interests. The final activity proposed, to "investigate the possibility of organising summer courses of a "bridging" or "remedial" type", could have more significance for internal teaching.

Monash (like some other universities) has also publicised a deferral scheme whereby students securing entry from high schools may defer their university place for at least a year. It expects that some will subsequently decide against taking up a place, while others, being clearer as to their reasons for studying, will be better motivated. Nevertheless, neither innovation in itself constitutes a significant shift towards recurrent education.

5.1.3.

Two universities established in 1970 have yet to take their first students. Murdoch, in Western Australia, finds it too early to be specific, but has "well recognised" its recurrent education responsibilities in planning discussions. "The University will certainly provide alternatives in a number of areas to the normal pattern of continuous full-time education followed by full-time work, although these may not all be available in the first year or two of our operations" (Dunn D.D., 1973).

Griffith University in Queensland has resolved that :

> From the commencement of teaching in 1975, the University will provide facilities and opportunities for recurrent education. This role will have two components - adult education, and continuing education. Adult education is considered to include general-interest courses often covering the same field as continuing education but without the expectation that they would have performance standards or be treated in any way as a form of qualification. Continuing education is considered to be study structured more towards formal objectives of performance or acquisition of knowledge given at the same academic levels as apply within the University generally, often tailored to specific professional industrial or social needs and regarded to some extent as adding to professional, occupational or educational qualifications ...
>
> The University recognises that, for some students, an interval between secondary and tertiary education may be desirable. Each year, a number of first year undergraduate places will be allotted for students who have been offered deferred admission one or two years previously. In 1973, 50 offers of deferred admission will be made to students completing 12th grade in a Queensland secondary school. These students will begin their studies with the first intake in 1975.
>
> Provision has been made for mature age students to be admitted to the University by Special Admission, to study for a degree on a full-time or part-time basis. The Council intends that every opportunity be given to those students to study for a first degree. A limited number of non-matriculated mature age students may be admitted as provisional matriculants ...
>
> The University will admit part-time students to undergraduate and post-graduate courses and is presently investigating ways by which the special academic needs of part-time students can be met (Topley, 1973).

Griffith has committed itself to community involvement, including teaching and research involving the surrounding community; this suggests

more deliberate interpenetration of university and society and so a shift towards lifelong education and the "learning society". The Registrar lists a number of fields and forms of programme whereby the University intends to open itself more for continuing education. They include : special and supplementary provision for (professional) interest groups; applied problem-solving courses in response to expressed external needs; special semester courses, including the third quarter semester; a variety of educational arrangements and packages; and credit, based on achievement, for a proportion of diploma and bachelor degree courses for those with occupational and professional achievement.

> As developments in the field of continuing education are derived from the University's educational philosophies, we have been free of many of the problems which plague the introduction of new ideas and innovative planning in other universities.

Unhampered by structural and planning inadequacies of earlier years, Griffith could become the first University to incorporate significant elements of recurrent education theory into its design. Other Australian universities have largely ignored the issues raised here, or relegated them to an adult/extension/continuing education wing which, along with some internal faculties and departments, arrange liberal and vocational refresher courses but do not touch the central question of full-time end-on education for school leavers.

5.1.4.

For example, the Australian National University established a Centre for Continuing Education in 1969 with considerable freedom to innovate. The Centre has explored, in writing and through special projects, aspects of lifelong education and the problems of relating educational institutions to other places of work, to render the latter more educative. In this it has operated as a distinct action-research unit. Although some other departments contribute to conferences and refresher programmes its impact on the University itself is negligible. Three replies from Australian National University professors to this inquiry illustrate the position :

- I am a believer in recurrent education for senior Public Servants ... Perhaps Continuing Education could make a contribution there.
- If what you advocate is that education should be a lifelong process, mingled with other activities, or interspersed between periods of work, then I am all in favour.

- I have no views about planning this work ... though I am convinced that many suggestions about broken education and sandwich courses are made without supporting evidence ... The nature of the brief you have in the Centre for Continuing Education is evidence of the concern in A.N.U. for recurrent education ...

Although these are in one way or another expressions of sympathy with continuing education, the University itself has if anything moved away from recurrent education. Part-time study has declined as a proportion of all degree work. Continuing education students are excluded from regular courses of teaching and separate, sometimes parallel, arrangements have to be made; such are specifically excluded from consideration for a new scheme of summer courses which are to be mainly remedial for existing degree students. Although deferment is possible, the University does not call attention to it and some school-leavers are unaware that they may defer without losing their place.

A recent scheme to give students university places on school recommendation without sitting for matriculation has been seen by some as a device to attract able students away from other universities rather than to reduce pressure on the high school curriculum. This view is supported by the fact that some such students are still advised to sit for matriculation in order to achieve acceptance by a particular faculty. The Australian National University is similar to other universities which support extramural departments but (consistent with a narrow definition of recurrent education) consider them largely irrelevant to the school-university and university-employment interfaces.

## 5.2 AN OPEN UNIVERSITY ?

Discussion about a possible open university in Australia has been couched mainly in terms of equal access to educational opportunity. Two proposals have attracted particular attention. One is that a national accrediting body should co-ordinate and facilitate the efforts of existing institutions (Falk and Anwyl, 1973). Since Australia already has a wealth of experience and provision (especially Queensland, New England and Macquarie Universities) for open and external education, this could be extended and systematised instead of creating a new university.

The other proposal is that an Australian National Open University should be set up with some of these but also with other functions (Adamson, 1972, Dunton, 1973).

One concern is that any such provision will benefit mainly the well educated, as with adult education in many countries and the British Open University. This leads to an emphasis on complete openness to entry, counselling facilities, effective advertisement of the facility among early leaving sectors of the community, etc. Some commentators consider that freeing up entry requirements, if this spreads to other universities, may in turn reduce the constraints which university entry requirements impose on school curricula, so gradually enhancing equality of opportunity through choice at the secondary level.

The Australian Council of State School Organisations holds that "tertiary selection needs should not dominate secondary school curricula"; it adheres to the concept of education as a lifelong process and is committed to equal opportunity in education for all Australians (ACSSO, 1973). ACSSO suggests that much school curriculum failure is caused by the universities. Open university developments could lead to curriculum changes which would make secondary school less alien for many students, so reducing one cause of inequality (and one barrier to recurrent education) at the secondary level.

Another submission makes a similar connection. It proposes a Committee on Open Development in Education as "an agent for change and innovation in post-secondary education", asserting that such a development could so encourage existing institutions to become more open that a special open university institution would not be required in the near future. "We believe that the Open University is at best no more than an admirable contribution to one aspect of open-ness in post-secondary education". Elsewhere the submission points out :

> The present selection system makes little provision for school leavers to postpone entry to post-secondary education, or for people to "drop in and drop out" of studies as their circumstances and needs change. As the actual number of post-secondary places increases therefore, there will be more young people in full-time, sequential studies, and out of contact with the realities of adult life. The isolation of so many young people in full-time education is questionable from a social point of view. It also implies that worthwhile learning can take place only in a formal setting, rather than in life and work itself (RMIT., 1973).

Of particular interest, because of the position of its authors, is the submission to the Open University Committee by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. Defining continuing education in terms of programmes involving systematic study leading to a degree or diploma qualification, including

both part-time and external students, the submission argues for a " 'network' for continuing education" to be organized "to ensure educational opportunities for all who wish to take advantage of it". It holds that more universities should offer programmes in external studies, that further development in programmes for part-time students should be encouraged, that both of these kinds of student should be more specifically catered for, and that continuing education as here defined "should be open to all who are motivated to take advantage of the opportunities it provides and who have the ability to learn" (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee", 1973).

Discussion of an open university for Australia, while mainly concerned with the relative advantages of establishing a new institution or setting up national machinery to foster open-ness in existing institutions, thus also raises wider questions about the school-university interface and the implications for schooling. Another theme is whether a university is indeed the appropriate term, or whether an open post-compulsory (further and tertiary) model would not be more appropriate. Other aspects include paid leave, full-or part-time study, and the cost of materials, travel etc., if such an institution is to appeal effectively to the educationally underprivileged. Although the discussion raises issues relevant to recurrent education, it is not consistently informed by the perspective on education, work and other social institutions which recurrent education implies. None the less, it is likely to lead quite quickly to institutional modifications fully accordant with the recurrent view of education.

## 5.3 UNIVERSITY COURSES OF STUDY

One element in a system of recurrent education might be for first degrees to be restricted in length and kept general rather than very specialised, in the expectation that people would proceed, perhaps after some years at work, to more specialised graduate diploma or higher degree studies, apart from returning from time to time for short refresher and diversification courses. There are signs that Australian universities are inclining in this direction. Probably a new School of Business Studies, to be created at the University of New South Wales, which already fosters an active refresher-type programme through its Institute of Administration, will accelerate a trend in favour of both credit and non-credit post-experience courses in administration and business studies.

One trend is towards masters' degrees by coursework, usually in some aspect of a subject having specific application (applied psychology, development economics, public administration) at the expense of masters'

and doctoral research degrees. The trend is acknowledged favourably in the Fifth Report of the Universities Commission. It is acknowledged also that some subjects, particularly aspects of management and administration, are better studied after experience than immediately following a first degree. Masters' programmes in such fields as educational administration tend to prescribe several years of practical experience as a condition of entry to the course.

Examination of this question, for instance in national search conferences on graduate employment and the interface between education and industry, has tended to put forward the model of a general first degree followed by more specialist training, preferably after some practical experience. There is a complementary tendency, in discussion at institutional and wider policy levels, to resist the tendency to lengthen first degree courses of study.

## 5.4 COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

The colleges are in a state of rapid transition. Single purpose colleges for the training of teachers, para-medical personnel and others are changing their status and identity. Old multi-level technical institutes are becoming tertiary colleges. Some new colleges have been established which are exclusively tertiary. There are pressures within the colleges to approximate to university behaviour and conditions, which militate against the characteristics of a recurrent system of education. There are also attempts to hold the colleges to a distinct path which would contribute to moving Australian education generally towards a recurrent model. This is the attitude of the Commission for Advanced Education (4.2.5.).

Replies from a number of colleges illustrate the position. Most suggest, if only for historical reasons (older, part-time students), acceptance of a narrow interpretation of recurrent education, and more awareness of a wider understanding than seems common in universities. The Western Australian Institute of Technology's School of Mines at Kalgoorlie points out that :

> as in any other C.A.E. students qualified by matriculation or mature entrants qualifications can start courses at practically any time of life. This means that intending students can return for studies in their original or other disciplines at any time, either as full-time or part-time students. In addition to this, in this year we have commenced the sandwich semester scheme of timetable which permits the person to study full-time for one semester of 17 weeks as a short term but full-time student.

A similar arrangement operates at the New South Wales Institute of Technology, for sandwich semester and part-time students. W.A.I.T. is conducting an Open Learning Project through its Education Development Unit, the thought underlying which is clearly oriented towards recurrent education.

The largest college in South Australia, the S.A. Institute of Technology, comments critically on the term recurrent education as being fashionably used in some ill-defined, all-embracing sense, and explains that the Institute is hampered not by interest but by lack of funds. The Institute Council favours provision for part-time industry-based students. Courses for full-time students are timetabled to accommodate part-timers :

> Perhaps a majority of our total student population would be of mature age, so that we have for many years provided continued opportunities of education ... we are considering restructuring some of our courses, particularly at the Graduate Diploma level, in such a way that units can be taken independently without commitment to the total course (for refresher or updating purposes) but can gain credit if the student wishes to complete a qualification course later (Mills, 1973).

This view of the student is becoming commoner. However universities usually judge their success in terms of degrees completed, not of units studied. A student who chooses to drop out for a while, or who intended only to take certain units, not a full degree, is recorded as a personal and institutional failure.

Roseworthy Agricultural College on South Australia, is rethinking its policy in relation to recurrent education, and examining what responsibility it has as a C.A.E. Its diploma students already include a significant number of post-experience students. Likewise Hawkesbury Agricultural College (NSW) has for several years offered an advanced rural extension diploma for extension officers with field experience. It is now planning to offer the same opportunity externally.

Another agricultural college reports that it is awaiting the report of a State Joint Committee of Agricultural Education set up in 1971 : "clearly ... we are in an infancy stage in our thinking on recurrent education. We are conscious of our, almost, rigid inflexibility and are seeking to remove this ..." Another agricultural college again comments on its responsibility for the local rural community expressed through summer programmes, management education, etc. Its approach suggests some appreciation of the lifelong education perspective, and a desire not to be confined to strictly tertiary work : "lack of financial support for further non-tertiary education will be the only deterrent to effectively providing a vigorous and well balanced programme for continuing education in the rural community."

The Principal of another Agricultural College reports that the College recommends prospective students to do full-time work after completing secondary school and before entering the College. "We have structured the course so that students can leave after 1, 2 or (hopefully) 3 years' study with useful skills, knowledge and attitudes. Later we hope to extend this principle to semester units, so that a 6 month sandwich course can operate." This respondent also expressed concern for recurrent education in rural communities generally, including the wives of farmers.

It seems that for practical rather than philosophical reasons, colleges with agricultural responsibilities or a predominantly rural clientele are quite open to recurrent education ideas, reflecting the difficulties of this section of the population where depopulation and periodic depression are the established pattern. Their lesser preoccupation with being traditionally academic and tertiary also appears to facilitate this outlook.

Some other colleges express a preference for students to have practical experience between school and college. The Teachers College, Goulburn (N.S.W.) commences its programmes nine months after the school certificate is taken, which imposes a nine month break on all its students. This, although a product of state planning in teacher education (to compensate for student teachers who drop out earlier in the year elsewhere), is regarded by the College as "highly educative".

The Canberra CAE offers short full-time non-credit courses, especially for public servants. Its first masters' programme, in the School of Education, follows models elsewhere in making several years of teaching a prerequisite. The College is planning appointments for continuing education within several Schools to facilitate the development of continuing and refresher programmes. Although it has a strong academic reputation the College also seeks to resist the tendency to squeeze out mature and part-time students in favour of the school-leaver; from its opening three years ago it has allowed limited numbers of non-matriculants to enter its (degree and degree-level) courses after some non-school experience.

The major college in Melbourne, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, is planning to integrate the activities of its Department of External Studies more closely into the Institute as a whole, with the progressive transfer of responsibilities for external tuition to full-time staff as part of their normal work. The difficulty is raising staffing levels enough to carry this through. R.M.I.T. is a multi-level institute including technical college work, and in future it expects to develop periodic refresher/retraining courses at both professional and technician levels.

It is hard to predict which way the advanced education sector will

move, since there are pressures to split it off more clearly from non-tertiary technical/further education. The Chairman of the NSW Higher Education Authority expects the colleges to increase their refresher provision :

> Looked at in a wider setting colleges would, in general, not be providing for "life long learning" although it would be my prediction that within the next ten years - with increasing automation, greater leisure, job redundancy, etc. - there will be large scale provision at the tertiary level for educational experience of a type not catered for extensively at the present time. Whether this will be undertaken within the framework of colleges of advanced education or in other existing tertiary institutions, such as universities, or in some entirely new educational institutions remains to be determined (Pratt, 1973).

## 5.5 THE POST-COMPULSORY NON-TERTIARY SECTOR

In this sector of formal (school and college) education, problems of planning and co-ordination towards recurrent education are evident, problems perhaps accentuated by a trend towards decentralisation which observers have long held to be desirable within the States system of education. Though not necessarily incompatible with recurrent education the tendency may impede the co-ordinated effort necessary for educational provision overall to become more responsive to recurrent patterns and needs. This is one difficulty facing the Technical and Further Education Committee which is directed to recommend in the areas of provision omitted by the other (schools, universities, advanced education) commissions, without embracing that training which takes place within industry.

### 5.5.1. Levels and technical education

A tertiary college respondent calls attention to the relation between this level and the trends discussed in 5.4 :

> The growth of multi-purpose Colleges of Advanced Education in country centres and on the periphery of large metropolitan areas is a movement in this direction. However, as Colleges of Advanced Education become more selective and more like traditional universities their effectiveness as comprehensive community colleges declines. It is at this point, in Australia, that the traditional technical college has

most to offer. The strengthening and development of technical colleges into comprehensive community colleges, and the development of new institutions based on this concept, could make a significant contribution to the ideas associated with continuing education. Particularly would this be so if the programmes of such colleges can be co-ordinated with the other programmes available in other institutions and also co-ordinated with television programmes in open education (Meyer, 1973).

The main barrier is the status disadvantage of traditional technical education with its trade connotations. Probably not many middle class parents would willingly have their children leave secondary school at 15 or 16 to go to technical college as they understand it. If instead separate post-compulsory secondary institutions are developed, as is being widely proposed in several quarters, choice and mobility is reduced at a cost both to effective equality of access and also to recurrent education.

The Australian Government is responsible for the Northern and Australian Capital Territories. In the former a Community College is being built in Darwin. The Principal believes that the College would lend itself to the idea of recurrent education. Since it is the only general educational institution in the Territory for post-compulsory education and has the advantage of being new it could provide a model for Australia. On the other hand, for the Australian Capital Territory, the Campbell Report, which recommended junior colleges for the post-compulsory secondary level as a transitional phase between the school and tertiary levels, excluded the Canberra Technical College. That College is now the subject of a separate inquiry. If it is not drawn into the general system of education for the Territory it is likely that some aspects of recurrence will be advanced by the junior colleges which will provide more attractive possibilities for older persons to return for general education, but that the liberal/vocational and work/education dichotomies which impede recurrent education will persist.

### 5.5.2. Possibilities and constraints in technical education

The States confront similar tensions between technical and community college ideas, and similar constraints affect the former from place to place. The only official comment from Victoria concerned technical education, which offers a wide spectrum of courses : the Technical Education Director sees a need for courses to meet a broad area of specialisations "so that there is common core material and so that specialization is delayed until later in the course" (Maddocks, 1973).

The Tasmanian Department, while claiming to have been providing recurrent education for many years, describes restrictions on this from without:

> Frankly I am inclined to think that the idea of recurrent education is something which academics, used to the traditional forms of education, have suddenly stumbled upon and consider it exciting. If it were to include a period of compulsory education to be spread through a lifetime I would agree. If on the other hand it simply means that further opportunities must be made available to adults for education, then I consider that the academics have overlooked the wealth of opportunity which has been available for many, many years in the technical college sector (Howse, 1973).

Recurrent education is described as "the life blood of technical education". Courses are designed for a diversity of educational backgrounds and of purposes; although some students go on to technical colleges straight from school "many courses are designed particularly for those who have been working for a period of time". The Director emphasises the variety of courses available in his own and other State technical systems, and the educational diversity of the clientele. It is intended to continue expanding the range of studies available for all age groups and purposes. In Tasmania adult education belongs to a separate statutory agency and is not part of the technical system; this is identified as one limitation on courses offered, since there is an agreement with the Adult Education Board, and also with the College of Advanced Education, demarcating provision by the three agencies.

Another limitation is finance for those studying full-time. Although (federal) Department of Labour schemes have considerably helped various people

> many people do not qualify under the terms of these awards and one might hope that finance will become available on a more generous basis in the future.
> I would be very tempted to urge the Trade Union Movement and Employers to seriously consider the life long education entitlement concept as a possible alternative to the 35 hour working week ... I .. endeavour to expound the concept of recurrent education and education as a life-long process and hope that the spreading of the message may have some small effect at least ...

The Department is also seeking ways of assessing work experience to give it credit towards an academic qualification. This at present applies only as an alternative to some formal qualifications for entrance purposes. "The next step is to see if it is possible to make some assessment so that perhaps early subjects within a course can be credited to the student as a

result of the work experience". The Director also takes seriously the idea that a person has an entitlement to education available to him as he chooses during his lifetime, and that further education opportunities should be linked to any raising of the age of compulsory attendance. In Tasmania the nominal leaving age is 16 but many younger persons get permission to leave earlier : "such individuals who sacrifice education at this younger age could be given later opportunities when the need for further education arises".

This State account displays two common attitudes in the technical field in Australia, one that recurrent education has been going on for many years, the other that constraints (organisational, financial, attitudinal in society generally and among unions and employers in particular) set severe limits to what can be done. The latter impression is reinforced by reading Tasmania's Technical Education Branch Handbook and by considering particular technical colleges. Given the exclusion of (non-vocational) adult education on the one hand, and of matriculation colleges on the other, the impression is naturally narrowly technical/vocational. Segmentation constitutes an obstacle to recurrent education, if only from the attitudes and stereotypes engendered. A committee in Tasmania is to consider integrating matriculation and technical colleges; the range of students now patronising the matriculation colleges is wider than just those seeking entrance to university.

Evidence from New South Wales (Cains, 1973) presents a similar picture of imaginative and ambitious vision hampered by organisational and financial constraints. Technical Education is a separate Department. General education embraces Evening Colleges, which use high schools for credit and non-credit general and recreational education for adults. The State also has a strong Workers' Educational Association with a large programme of non-vocational courses, alone and in conjunction with two universities, especially in the metropolitan areas. Technical Education caters especially for part-time vocational students at many levels, supplementing on-the-job experience, as well as offering full-time pre-vocational courses (1972, Handbook).

Each course could be regarded as terminal, but many are designed to further vocational skills through a sequence or system of study. These include post-trade and post-certificate courses :

> In the system of vocational courses, many discrete courses are complementary and interrelated, so as to provide opportunities for extended vocational education continuing (within limits) as far as the student wishes it, within special vocational areas. The system also includes courses of a remedial type ... leading to entry to tertiary institutions.

> Within the system, the possible span of vocational education is nowadays more limited than in an earlier period when a student could enter a College as a pre-apprenticeship student, and continue through to completion of a Diploma course at professional level. But the present system of vocational courses still reflects a notion of continuity ... implied in recurrent education. (Cains, 1973).

Organisational constraints thus tend to segment educational purposes and provision, again illuminating both the predicament of the Kangan Committee and the reasons of those who wish to widen the brief of the Committee on an Open University. As elsewhere, this State technical system has been confined quite narrowly to that part of education concerned with work roles; it has in consequence been stigmatised as "training" rather than education, for instance by some (liberal) adult educators. This removes it from the view of recurrent education which sees certificates as "steps and guides towards a process of lifelong education and lifelong career and personality development" (1.3).

Another limitation, apprentice regulations, is considered below (6.3). On the positive side the N.S.W. Technical Department has introduced two trade level pre-employment courses :

> in response to an expressed need for alternative education for school students who have gained the School Certificate, in New South Wales country towns. Many of these students are unable to obtain apprenticeships and have continued, in the past, at secondary school with little motivation ... On successful completion of his course, the student is much better placed to enter a skilled trade ... He then enters second year of the trade course proper ... The introduction of these pre-employment courses in a number of country towns affords a good example of Technical Colleges operating as "community colleges". The "social dimension" of recurrent education is expressed in the extended scope of educational opportunities in these localities ...

Finally, the Department does offer a number of non-vocational courses in the colleges of the hobby and craft kind, and expects the number to increase if funds permit. The change of name to Technical and Further Education which is imminent, while it raises the problem of renegotiating roles and responsibilities with the general Educational Department, may allow fuller use of technical college facilities and reduce the segmentation which is inimical to the concept of recurrent education. At the same time the Workers' Educational Association is currently examining the concept, much of which is "inherent in the WEA's approach to adult education" (Bentley, 1973). At present the WEA cannot say whether this may lead to any changes in its activities.

South Australia also has a distinct department for further, including technical, education. While this is the main agency for vocational and adult education, the Director-General of Education refers also to the enrolment of mature age students in secondary schools as free students with incidental allowances, to informal recurrent (community) education from time to time through the schools, and to activities and plans for the release and refresher education of teachers on a substantial scale (Jones A.W., 1973). The Department is also planning to develop two comprehensive high schools as community centres on a pilot basis; they will be available to facilitate recurrent education in the community whenever the high school routine permits. This policy also guides the building of new high schools, facilities being made available for classes of the Department of Further Education as well as for other educational, cultural and recreational purposes.

The Director of the Department of Further Education has committed himself to a permanent or lifelong perspective in education (Bone, 1972, 1 and 2). He holds the view that :

> the design of educational institutions will have to be adapted to meet the needs of the whole community rather than a restricted group of students. This is the Further Education or Community College which forms an educational centre encouraging and maintaining links with local and regional cultural and sporting societies, choirs, orchestras and so on. New Technical Colleges are named which are being developed on this principle. Similarly the adult education centres are developing a diversity of function as they move towards the concept of colleges of further education. In these more and more vocational courses are being introduced as the need to meet community demands in the most direct way is recognised.

This development over recent years has attracted criticism from Australian adult educators concerned that the more utilitarian courses will crowd out liberal and general education. It is also possible that adult educators sense a "culture conflict" for adult education students who are typically well educated and middle class, whereas the typical technical college student is of lower educational and socio-economic status.

Although a case can be made against separating further education completely from general education, the South Australian experiment should prove of value to the country, both because its brief is a modern one much wider than technical education (although its origins are the technical education division of the general purpose department, which then also previously embraced adult education) and because the Director is familiar with

concepts of lifelong learning (for instance as leader of the Australian delegation to the 1972 Tokyo Unesco World Conference) and has defined his objectives widely rather than in a limited way. The State elected a more planning oriented (Labor) government two years before Australia, and provides something of a laboratory in which the possibilities of recurrent education for Australia may be probed more rapidly than elsewhere. Since the State is also committed to administrative decentralisation of education in line with the (1971) Karmel Report, any tensions in such an evolution for Australia may be explored on this more local level.

5.5.3. A proposal for recurrence

Apart from the papers by Bone mentioned above, the only attempt to spell out the meaning of continuing and especially recurrent education for Australia discovered in preparation for this Report is by O'Brien and Briggs, as evidence for the Kangan Committee. The paper, "Time as an educational variable", advances recurrent education as important both to a manpower policy and to the social needs of individuals and the community.

The paper follows the distinctive OECD definition of recurrent education and its objectives of occupational flexibility, equity and the integration of education with active life. It points out that adopting this as the integrating principle for the education system would mean "a profound change in the articulation of the various sub-systems which comprise compulsory and post-compulsory education", and discusses what this might mean for the existing definitions of role of both technical and further education. For initial education it points out that the chief objective would be "to equip a future adult with the tools he would need for self-teaching in the future" (cf. Dare, 1973). Also initial education "should not leave aside the task of preparing the student for his working life. Such a policy would remove the barriers between 'cultural' education, hitherto often regarded as the only genuine form of education, and vocational training, often regarded with some scorn as being purely utilitarian".

Among specific recommendations are included : acceptance of recurrent education as the integrating principle of education; mounting a public education campaign to this end; introducing graduate programmes in andragogy; fostering liaison between established agencies of education conducive to the recurrent education concept; and arranging consultation with leaders of trade unions, industry and commerce about legislation to permit retraining without substantial loss of earnings.

This review of trends in thought and provision within the formal system of education confirms the desirability of such initiatives if the

recurrent education concept is to influence the system in any significant way. At the same time it shows that there are many piecemeal initiatives which contribute to a general shift in this direction, and which could contribute to quite rapid precipitation if conditions and attitudes proved favourable. The same impression derives from consideration of trends outside the formal system of education.

## 6. TOWARDS RECURRENT EDUCATION ? - TRENDS AND IDEAS ELSEWHERE

### 6.1 GENERAL SOCIETAL TRENDS

It is easier to read into media reports and discussions, and other evidence of "grass-roots" trends, whatever one is seeking, than to judge accurately how significant such trends might be. There are several social movements which tend to favour a shift towards recurrent education, some of them formally unrelated to this concept. Thus the cause of equal rights for women has been espoused both by women's associations and, to some extent, by public authorities and the unions. Equal pay and non-discrimination in appointment to jobs have attracted most attention, but, given that women are educationally disadvantaged compared with men at secondary and tertiary levels, and that inflexibility in employment penalises women (through child-bearing) more universally than men, it is likely that there will be pressure from this direction towards a recurrent model of educational opportunity, and congruent opportunities for interrupted employment.

There has been interest in the relations between society and education in many quarters, and an attack on institutionalised education isolated from wider social experience. The Australian Union of Students brought Ivan Illich to this country in 1972; his ideas attracted great and continuing interest among students. There appear to be many local initiatives and experiments in "learning cell" study among students, quite apart from shifts in emphasis from teaching to group learning, using expertise as a resource rather than for direction, on the part of secondary and tertiary teachers.

One Learning Exchange has been under way for some months in Victoria and there are attempts to emulate this elsewhere. A community "school without walls" in Canberra has obtained recognition and support to enable it to come into official existence for the 1974 school year. One aim is "to

foster contact between students and individuals or institutions in the community which can offer a range of studies not normally available in the conventional school curriculum" (Canberra Times, October 1973). These and other incidents and tendencies suggest that the climate among those close to the education system, especially as clients, aspiring or disaffected clients, may be changing in a way congenial to the recurrent concept. (It may be argued that Illich's "deschooling" ideas are in fact antithetical to recurrent education. My own view of both recurrent and lifelong education is that Illich is an important ally; this arises from attention to the learning processes and processes central to an effective recurrent education system, rather than to administrative format. Formally, "deschooling" is an extreme and so antithetical position, as suggested in OECD's Recurrent Education, 1973, pp. 11-12).

## 6.2 TRENDS AMONG SOME PROFESSIONS

### 6.2.1. Scope and responsibility

A number of professional associations, notably in medicine and teaching, have shown increasing interest in some aspects of recurrent education. Mostly the interest is narrowly confined to the need for refresher education opportunities to enable practitioners to keep up to date in times of accelerating change and obsolescence of knowledge and skills. As within the univerisities, to which some of these associations look for refresher and updating courses, there is very little questioning of the framework and assumptions within which initial pre-service professional training and qualification is couched.

As in other countries, it can be disputed who is responsible for professional refresher education. In Australia it tends to be the individual practitioner and his association for the more senior professions, but the employer has come into the picture increasingly in the public sector, for instance teaching. Late in 1973 the Australian Government made a grant of $ 1,200,000 to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for post-first degree education by the College to raise the quality of general practice, a substantial step towards public support in this professional area. The need for formal post-experience diversification or specialist courses is now widely recognised in public support for business and management schools, post-experience diploma and master's programmes in administration, etc.

Whatever the emphasis, it is agreed that professional refreshment must

be a shared responsibility between professional associations and institutes, educational agencies (universities and colleges) and perhaps the employer. In some cases the professional person is self-employed. Where he is in public or private corporation employment, part-time, short full-time, and sometimes lengthy full-time study is facilitated. There appears to be more questioning of the trend towards extended initial education. In medicine for instance the first degree is gradually being reduced by one or possibly even two years, although the period of internship and further training for membership of a specialist college tends to lengthen, as well as immediately following full-time study.

Feehan (1973) suggests possible conflict within professional institutes generated by the need for refresher education, as younger members of the professions ally with younger academics to foster shared values which run counter to the more conservative traditions of senior practitioners. This alliance could likewise generate stress in the universities by emphasising the continuing responsibility of professional faculties to their alumni, and the need for closer communication and possibly articulation of values between the two kinds of institution. (However, such articulation already exists to a degree quite harmoniously in medicine, where refresher education is arranged by a number of university post-graduate committees.). Feehan examines advantages and disadvantages of closer relations and concludes that mutual interdependence must increase.

While the most appropriate division of labour is a matter of disagreement, there appears to be a trend towards tertiary institutions being responsible for general education, after which graduates go to work for a while, returning to more specialised study as they acquire different or enhanced responsibilities. In addition, whether from professional association meetings, short courses in tertiary institutions, or special programmes arranged by employers, they receive periodic refresher education in new areas of knowledge or skill, and stimulus to continue their own self-directed leaning.

Running counter to this model there may be a tendency on the part of some professional institutes both to foster lengthening of and accretion to the course of pre-service education demanded as a condition for membership and the right to practice. This is inimical to the recurrent education concept, and also hampers adaptation to new needs and opportunities. Boileau (1973) argues that difficulties in the education of planners, as large-scale regional planning becomes more fashionable, point to continuing education as the only practicable corrective to the conservatism of the main planning schools.

6.2.2. Public service professional officers

The concentration at the professional level on refresher/continuing education is illustrated by some examples. The Professional Officers' Association for such personnel in the federal public service thinks in terms of roughly a fifteen year cycle for the outdating of initial training and knowledge; in some areas this is as little as five years. The Association's policy is to secure conditions conducive to periodic updating, including sabbatical leave. Management training is also encouraged, after ten to fifteen years, to accord with the typical professional person's career development of about this time (Cox, 1973).

This is in harmony with the expressed policy of the Australian Public Service Board which "acknowledges that full-time education followed by a life time of work is not the most effective pattern of education and recognises the need for recurrent education" (Paul, 1973). The Service provides study assistance both non-directively for officers who plan their own education, by means of fee reimbursement and time off for courses of various length and format, and directively through training and retraining programmes in response to service needs.

The Public Service Board of New South Wales (the largest public service outside the federal) has a similar approach to in-service education including part-time leave to study for first and higher degrees. The Board is committed to human resource development (drawing on Leonard Nadler's Developing Human Resources, Texas, 1970, as a guide) and arranged for Nadler to visit Australia in 1973. It seeks to make available a long-term career programme of recurrent education; the 1973 course directory entitled Human Resource Development lists courses available through external educational agencies (degrees etc.) as well as courses of the Board and the different departments. In its introduction the Directory sets out Nadler's distinction between training (to get jobs done), education (to move people ahead in the organisation, preparing them for higher positions) and employee development "so that he moves with the organisation as it develops, changes and grows - hence its focus on the organisation. The result could be a new job at a higher level or an expansion of the current activities of the employee into new fields which are as yet undetermined". This approach illustrates a general development of awareness which could contribute from another direction to the acceptance of recurrent and especially lifelong concepts of education (see 6.3.).

6.2.3. Law

The legal profession's interest in recurrent education is restricted

to refresher activities, as through the Committee for Post-Graduate Studies of the University of Sydney Law Faculty and various state Law Societies. The Commercial Law Association, NSW, seeks to provide a bridge between business and lawyers in the field, and business law, using seminars and a bulletin for cross-fertilisation. The Law Council of Australia conducts a number of activities, all "essentially on-going in the sense of imparting new developments to previously educated lawyers"; they are seen as steps towards recurrent education rather than recurrent as such (Waddy, 1973). The Law Society of South Australia seeks, through lectures, seminars and conferences, to keep its members abreast of legal developments. Likewise in Western Australia where, although recurrent education is not highly developed, post-graduate and continuing education are receiving attention from an Education Sub-Committee. It is unlikely that the profession will itself move further towards recurrent education, given the control over practice and the pre-service training and apprenticeship which are required. The Australian National University's recently developed and highly successful graduate level Legal Workshop is within this tradition; although it is designed to give more practical pre-service experience it is still end-on from undergraduate training.

6.2.4. Veterinary surgeons

Like the legal profession, the Veterinary Association in Sydney takes advantage of the University of Sydney's expertise in the refresher field through a Post-Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science which has for over a decade sought to update the profession, especially private practitioners. Characteristic of the present fragmented state of the field, replies to the inquiry associated with this report came only from the Department of Adult Education at that University, referring to its own adult education and extension work. Mention of the University's more specialised refresher activities came from the professional associations concerned.

6.2.5. Architecture

The Victorian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, in a preliminary report on continuing education in the building profession, draws on U.K. proposals which lean away from further lengthening of pre-qualification courses, the traditional response to demands for increased competence. This is seen as economically non-viable; the alternative is to re-appraise all education in the building professions to translate continuing education into an established fact of professional life in place of fragmented and unrelated short courses. At present little refresher

education occurs in Australia, especially among those in private practice where there is little tangible reward for the professional time lost and no membership compulsion to continue studying. Those in the public sector enjoy the greater flexibility associated with larger organisations. The report favours a national continuing education unit for the profession, with resource centres in each major area based on existing teaching resources, and suggests that employers should allow staff to commit themselves to three full days a year to allow attendance at three day courses. To combat a lack of incentive, accreditation of courses (presumably with the intention that attendance be mandatory) is suggested within ten years.

6.2.6. Engineering

The Secretary of the Institute of Engineers of Australia comments on the rapidity of change and increasing complexity in engineering, and the demands from its members on the Institute for continuing education. Engineering has also exerted pressure on some tertiary faculties for refresher courses, and played a part in Monash University's decision to establish a continuing education unit to service such demands generally. From the School of Engineering of Caulfield Institute of Technology (Melbourne) comes the view that much continuous learning in engineering belongs outside the classroom "on the actual job or by contact with other engineers. The best contact with others working in the same field takes place at meetings of professional societies. My view is that continuing education for the professional engineer centres very largely on the activities of these professional societies ..." (Brownlee, 1973). Although not regarding adult or continuing education as one of the college's principal functions he sees a particular need to assist those with sub-professional qualifications who seek to upgrade their status later in life, and mentions the possibility of arranging conversion courses. Such a development would accord with the concept of recurrent education, in a discipline where "hard" and rapidly changing knowledge constitutes a problem for the late comer in particular and for sustaining professional competence generally.

A report on the continuing education of professional engineers in Australia (Corbett, 1972) examines the responsibility for this work as between learned societies, educational institutions and government. It suggests a division of responsibility for continuing education defined as "any formal educational activity appropriate to a university graduate, other than a program leading to a diploma or a degree" which "aims to give a professional engineer opportunities to advance his qualifications beyond the basic level". Like most comments from professional associations it takes

the formal full-time model of initial education for qualification as given. While acknowledging that such study might help an engineer to win promotion, the author recommends on balance that academic credits be not associated with formal education. The period from five to twenty years after graduation is seen as the most fruitful and relevant for continuing education.

Recommendations include tax exemption for the continuing professional education of engineers (which has subsequently been introduced as a general concession up to $ 400), also that universities and colleges should not be at a financial disadvantage through providing courses of continuing education. The Universities Commission's reply to this would be that it is for the universities to levy direct costs from the students in such courses, and to subsidise indirectly out of their general budgets if they so desire. Corbett recommends consideration of a technical committee on continuing education of the Institute and stimulation for divisional interest: recently the Institute asked one of its State branches to form a working party on continuing education.

6.2.7. Pharmacy

The Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria has been looking at continuing education possibilities for some time. This excludes consideration of the basic professional preparation; a student must complete the degree course and a year's "in-field" training before being eligible for a licence to practise, which is renewable annually. The Victorian College of Pharmacy "does not encourage persons to take a break between secondary and tertiary education, but it does not impose any penalty on persons taking such a break". It is considering converting the full-time three year course to a four year sandwich course and it allows occasional qualified pharmacists to return for single subject units to keep themselves abreast of new developments. This could be seen as a first step towards a recurrent model.

The report of the working party sub-committee of the continuing education committee of the Society favours the development of post-graduate diplomas and professional master's degrees. It also favours superseding the present ad hoc provision of lectures, seminars etc. by more systematic provision of continuing education designed to "offer certification as a basis for professional satisfaction, appointment and promotion" and to provide a basis for re-registration. The appointment of a director of continuing education for the Society is proposed. The Pharmacy Board is reportedly interested to use re-registration as a sanction compelling practitioners to demonstrate continuing educational attainment, and is looking with interest at developments in the profession in Britain.

Without exploring the arguments for and against compulsion one may note that the idea is gaining acceptance among professional groups that continuing right to practise, or promotion, might be linked to continuing education. The Australian Department of Health, listing ten medical and paramedical occupations, including pharmacy, which are registrable professions, goes so far as to say that "programs for recurrent education in the health field could apply only to those occupational categories for which educational and training standards are required..." This completely equates right to practise with refresher education, suggesting that the latter cannot be attempted without the sanction of possible loss of employment. The same letter cites a 1972 parliamentary select committee on pharmaceutical benefits which recommended both that financial assistance be provided for refresher programs of doctor education by professional bodies on a continuing basis, and that eventually accreditation to prescribe under the National Health Scheme be dependent on participation in such programs (Refshauge, 1973).

Although it makes no suggestion so strong as this, the report from the National Hospitals and Health Services Commission's interim committee stresses the major importance of both education and continuing education of doctors and others in the proposed community health teams. It could be that increasing government influence or control will accelerate the move towards compulsory continuing education in the health area. On the other hand there is no substantial evidence in this, as in most professions, of consideration for a more substantial reconsideration of the pattern of initial study for accreditation, employing the recurrent education concept.

### 6.2.8. Medicine

The medical profession, like engineering, experiences rapid innovation and technological change, though the effects of obsolescence may be less visible to the non-professional. Within the profession there are signs of increasing concern about remaining up to date, and some flow back from this concern in the form of questioning the length and content of initial medical education. Although there has been no suggestion of deferring entry to medical schools from secondary education, there are signs both that the initial full-time period of study will be reduced, and that internship will receive more attention to make it genuinely educative rather than essentially an inexpensive form of medical service to hospitals. Similarly, there are moves towards converting nurse education to a more educational experience by subordinating the service element to the learning needs of nurses in training. Although not part of a discussion of recurrent education,

such debate and reform, by examining the relationship between learning and service in apprentice type settings, may make a contribution to clarifying this relationship and interface in Australia which will also contribute to thought about recurrent education.

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine of the University of Sydney asserts that the medical profession has long placed importance on continuing education, through the Postgraduate Committees of most Medical Schools, the Royal Colleges, and various specialist societies. As to ensuring that these services are used :

> so far the emphasis has been on exhortation - dangling the carrot in front of the practitioners - but, unfortunately, this is to a large extent preaching to the converted. It has little effect on the intellectually lazy, the inefficient and the recalcitrant, and thoughts are turning to the use of the stick - that is to say some form of compulsion. The disadvantages of this latter approach are only too apparent. Nevertheless the concept of "re-evaluation" is rapidly gaining ground ... (Macpherson, 1973).

At present this is not practicable because there is not the systematic provision of learning opportunities against which practitioner can be judged. "The concept of re-evaluation must, I think, inevitably spread to other professions and to the skilled trades ..."

A national seminar on financial responsibility for continuing medical education (September 1973) at which all the major medical specialisms were represented, suggested the need for coordination of efforts in the field of continuing medical education generally, and for government assistance with the costs (which tend to be borne by doctors themselves with some assistance from pharmaceutical company and other donations); it also displayed growing concern with the whole question of evaluation.

Some groups, such as the College of Surgeons, lay emphasis on self education and self assessment, rejecting "such devices as compulsory peer examinations" as inconsistent with ideals of motivation and spontaneity. The Obstretricians and Gynaecologists, by contrast, are introducing Fellowship through a diploma which will become the certificate of accreditation for membership of the College : "the regulations include a clause which requires the continuing education of the holder. It will be necessary to re-apply for the qualification 10 years after it is awarded in the first instance and thereafter at 5 yearly intervals" (Kneale, 1973), R.C.O.G., 1974).

This is the first College to make continuing education obligatory for its members, but the College of Physicians, in a Report on Continuing

Education and Re-evaluation, is moving cautiously in the same direction. The report, which is confidential until physicians have had the opportunity to discuss it, inclines towards some form of continuing re-assessment linked to participation in programmes of continuing education. Generally the major Colleges and the smaller specialist societies are moving towards a commitment to systematised continuing education by one means or another, possibly using the sanction of re-registration. The only other implication for recurrent education as such is in the complementary questioning of initial full-time training. While this may be both improved and reduced in length it is unlikely to be further re-organised.

6.2.9. Teaching

The education of techers is important since it is the area of professional preparation in which educationists, especially the employing education departments, have the most immediate influence. It is also a very large professional group, and one mainly in the public sector. There is widespread commitment to refresher education for the profession on the part of federal and state governments (as in the reports mentioned earlier) and teacher associations. This is taking the form of commitment to some form of sabbatical or study leave for approved purposes, possibly mandatory attendance at short courses from time to time, and recognition of evidence of continued planned education through course attendance for promotion purposes.

The responsibility is held to rest with the employers and with the teachers themselves, mainly individually but with support from general and (in some subjects) specialist associations. Responsibility has demonstrably not been laid on tertiary institutions, except at the advanced diploma and higher degree level, by the non-allocation of special resources for continuing education by the relevant commissions. However, many departments of tertiary institutions, not only those charged with teacher education itself, feel concern about and some obligation towards the refresher education of teachers.

Teachers are also very prominent among the clientele for both external and part-time degrees and non-credit extramural courses of universities. For the former, which is a way of raising the qualifications of the poorly qualified members of the profession, and sometimes also for the latter, they attract varying degrees of support and financial assistance from their employers. Apart from concern about these poorly qualified members, support for refresher education for the profession may stem from a vague concern about alienation or apathy in some schools, from concern about the separation

of students' experience at this age from the world outside school, and from a belief that teachers need more diverse experience than they acquire from continuous contact with young people unchallenged by further opportunities for education and reflection.

The same concern with the predicament of teachers, coming from school to college and back into school, has led to support for mature entrants to the profession. This is also fostered by the very high rates of withdrawal from the profession during training and the early years of service, and by the related increasing feminisation of the service. Although these are not directly arguments for a recurrent education system they do contribute to moving teacher education in this direction. More directly the result of such an approach is the multiplication of specialised post-experience courses which are separated from initial training by several years of teaching.

Two teachers' associations, replying to inquiries for this report, looked more widely than at their own members' education. The South Australian Institute of Teachers "is beginning to consider the question of the number of years children spend at school under compulsion". It is suggested that pre-school provision and entry to compulsory schooling should be linked so as to allow entry to the latter when the child is suited, rather than at an arbitrary legal age, "and at the other end, make provision for those who seem to be getting little out of school. Extension of older-age education and employment for early leavers are two matters relevant to the modification of the 15 year leaving age" (Lamborne, 1973).

The Tasmanian Teachers Federation argues against compartmentalising life and for periodic re-training :

> School education should be concerned with methods of learning and self directed courses rather than acquiring a body of knowledge. If education is to recur throughout life concept becomes even more important. Teachers generally accept this view but parents and the community are not so aware of the trend or convinced of its value. The end of school and the beginning of work should not perhaps be a sharp division. The setting of a compulsory age of attendance has been questioned as some students get little out of education in their late teens but might be better going into employment either part-time or full-time and returning to education later when they are better motivated. (Backhouse, 1973).

Among other specific points the Federation mentions that the State Department has set up a committee to consider granting service credits for other

employment. "At the moment new recruits to teaching must start at the bottom of salary scales and this acts against recruitment from other fields."

These comments suggest that the concepts contained in Learning To Be are receiving attention within the teaching profession. Support for local and national discussion of the implications of this book, for example through the Department of Education advised by the National Unesco Commission, may be expected to spread these ideas quite rapidly, and there may as a result be considerable examination at all levels in the profession of possible restructuring of the education system towards a recurrent education model.

## 6.3. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE WORLD OF WORK

Lifelong education, the learning society, and the wider understanding of recurrent education, embrace the view that education is wider than schooling and formal tertiary study, and that it takes place through work as well as in the classroom. There are in Australia signs of serious interest and commitment to attempts to reorganise work to make it more challenging and rewarding, and to set industrial training in this context of the re-design of work, both specific tasks and the wider arrangement of tasks and responsibilities in organisations, their sections and functional units.

The main theoretical underpinning for this work is the socio-technical systems approach of F.E. Emery and others. Emery, who has been involved in pioneering such work in Norway, is conducting a number of action-research projects with Australian public and private organisations, including the South Australian Government and Australian subsidiaries of several multinational corporations which have conducted similar experimental projects overseas. The results of surveys by a firm of management consultants suggest that there is increasing concern for human factors as critical to business success among Australian managers (P.A., 1973); the New South Wales public service's interest in Nadler's view of human resource development points in the same general direction (see 6.2.2.).

There are some signs that industrial and management training are being re-examined from this perspective. This would imply becoming an initiator of change within the organisation, rather than merely preparing persons for existing slots. A number of educational and consultant agencies, among them the Australian National University's continuing education centre, are involved in experimental projects which seek to translate into practice

the meaning of "the learning society" for the organisation of work and the nature of in-service training. Since a major thrust in this work is the need to respond and become more adaptive, faced with accelerating and uneven change, it relates closely to the concept of recurrent education and may be expected to facilitate the introduction of the idea, as well as the wider concept of lifelong education.

While these trends favour recurrent education the present condition of industrial training is far removed from such a notion. As in the professional area, so among trade unions, there is increasing support for union management education. However the present system of basic full-time education and apprenticeship is largely unquestioned. This makes unions and professional associations alike supporters of narrowly conceived continuing education but conservative in relation to recurrent education.

Apprenticeship is a particularly vexed subject for technical education departments and colleges. It is seen as a major barrier to freeing up post-compulsory and later life opportunities for education. According to the New South Wales Department of Technical Education :

> adult entry into skilled trades touches on one of the most sensitive and jealously guarded areas of Trade Union policy. The Department's courses, operating as they do within the structure of apprenticeship, Trade Unions, and industry generally, are effectively closed to adults. But this is not by virtue of the Department's policies. Clearly, the right of entry of adults into skilled trades is a matter of major importance in any wide programme of recurrent education. But changes in this direction must first come from industry and concerned Trade Unions (Cains, 1973).

The Department is also exploring a "job-cluster" approach where there are "families of skills" in a number of related though discrete operations. This means common basic syllabi with specialisation in discrete clusters, using a "modular" approach. It would increase the student's employment mobility, but traditional Trade Union attitudes to demarcation are seen as an obstacle to implementation.

On the other hand the Department, and other respondents from the technical area, mention courses which are serving a retraining function, some students receiving assistance under the national Employment Training Scheme. Here there is no upper limit, and many students in training are preparing at a mature age for relatively skilled work for the first time. Another pressure for freeing up trade restrictions is continuing immigration into the country, and official efforts to secure reciprocal recognition of qualifications and trade skills between States as well as of appropriate

overseas training. Another factor is that some union leaders are wedded to reorganisation and democratisation of work as mentioned above, and more are becoming exposed to similar ideas and developments among unions and in education in certain European countries.

The Australian Department of Labour has for some time been committed to retraining, particularly for those displaced from farming, and has given limited support to retraining for such persons providing there is evidence that there are job vacancies matching the training they acquire. This interest and commitment has been strengthened with the change to a Labor Federal Government, and it seems probable that trade unions will progressively free up their attitudes to apprenticeship as recognition of the need for flexibility and the growing problem of skill obsolescence spreads through the union movement.

Unions tend to emphasise the need for more study time for apprentices at the employer's and government's expense, and for paid leave for later educational opportunity. Commitment to a national scheme of union education both specifically in union skills and more generally, is written into Labor Party policy. Although an element in recurrent education as well as an attempt to even up the disadvantage which unions suffer in negotiation with employer representatives who have more opportunity for continuing as well as initial education, the trade union scheme of education is largely a discrete proposal.

More far-reaching is a union commitment to the idea of paid study leave for whatever purpose, and a less widely canvassed idea among some unionists that in future unions should seek more extended annual leave, some of it explicitly for educational purposes, instead of striving further to reduce the length of the working week. Should this find support it could prove a very significant step towards a national scheme of recurrent education. It should be added that the Australian Council of Trade Unions appointed an Education Officer several years ago, and that there have been several further appointments as union education officers around the country in recent months.

The most recent formal statement of trade union policy generally as it affects education came from the September 1973 Congress resolution of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, which referred to the

> fundamental importance of the education system in the development and well-being of the community, and calls upon the A.C.T.U., State Branches and affiliated Unions to give appropriate weight to this factor in their consideration of social and community issues ...
> Congress welcomes the growing acceptance of the concept of lifelong

education. The availability of education throughout life, firstly, helps to offset early economic or social disadvantages, and secondly, is an essential response to the rapid rate of technological, economic and social change in the world today. The educational needs and expectations of the community require that education be available so that people will be free to engage in it to meet their own needs, vocational or non-vocational - at times appropriate to their own personal development and situation.

Congress therefore, welcomes the establishment of the Open University Enquiry and the Committee on Technical and Further Education and calls for urgent priority to be given to the rapid development of existing and new educational institutions capable of meeting the requirements of lifelong education ...

Congress draws attention to the international recognition of the need for paid educational leave for all workers being expressed by Unesco and the ILO. The educational provision for disadvantaged groups, for lifelong education (including technical education) and for trade union education set out in this statement can only be fully achieved if every person in the community is entitled to a period of education at public expense supported by the availability of paid educational leave (Matthews, 1973).

The reply received from Australia's largest union is interesting for the approach to education which it suggests. It quotes the union's 1973 Conference resolution on union education. Commenting that the change of government reflected an important turn "towards social and human questions and a quest for a more humane society" the resolution continues :

with these objectives in mind our program should be orientated to radical collective and self-educative processes that get away from authoritarian schoolroom type situations, and place emphasis on our members' learning and relevance and importance of their own experience... At the same time, we determine that the demand for the Employers to pay for study leave be given greater priority in all Logs of Claims and negotiations (Heffernan, 1973).

The President of the same union, in an address to the Department of Labour's national conference on Training for Industry and Commerce (1971) argued against a narrow interpretation of training :

In spite of some lip service paid to the needs for a broad education, all current vocational training tends to be narrow and limiting (even at University level and at other levels more so - some skilled tradesmen,

technicians, commercial staff, etc.). Workers will never achieve work satisfaction and involvement while lack of training effectively limits their horizons. Education should go beyond job requirements ... The concept of continuing education as well as continuing training (in a narrow sense) is also important in relation to the removal of inequalities in educational opportunity and would open up further opportunities and visions for workers in the post-school and later years. (Department of Labour and National Service, 1971, p. 81).

Despite this and some other individuals' statements, the general approach of this conference was narrow; it took as given the formal education system and the dichotomisation of school education from work, treating training entirely within the context of the latter. By contrast, two years later, one hears quite often the view that more training might usefully be injected into secondary education, perhaps likened to part-time experience of work, and that general as well as specialist education or training should be available as a right, to unionists and others, during their working life.

It is possible that, from this basis of widening interest in compensatory educational opportunity and a reduced polarisation between general education and training, a proposal might come forward for a period of education as a right, to be taken at each person's discretion, in place of the present system of compulsory education for ten years, and post-compulsory education at the initiative and expense of parents and students. The costs of such a proposal have yet to be explored in Australia, although one relevant exploratory paper has been printed in Australia (Gannicott, 1971).

It is not possible adequately to describe in-service training in the public service, industry and commerce. Some organisations have very large programmes, including their own colleges; many have substantial training departments. The recently (1971) formed Australian Institute of Training and Development reflects and contributes to a growing sense of professional identity and purpose among training personnel. The terms of reference of the Kangan Committee exclude training within industry. Corbett (1972), examining the refresher training of engineers and the practice of Australian organisations, believes that industry should not be encouraged to develop internal courses of continuing education in professional fields, but should support the efforts of learned societies and educational institutions.

Summarising, in-service education or training is a very substantial field of provision. Its scale is not accurately known but it is apparently expanding rapidly. As yet it is conceived almost entirely apart from other

education, both formal and informal. For this reason, it makes no contribution to an emerging view of recurrent education in Australia involving the restructuring of "front-end" education. However, it has great potential to make such a contribution, and is likely to be drawn into discussion of educational reform and renovation, especially if the tendency to look to the community and non-schooling agencies for an educational contribution continues.

## 6.4 ADULT EDUCATION

Reference has been made to adult education at places in this report. It embraces a diversity of provision by informal community and recreational associations as well as by agencies committed exclusively to such adult education, notably Workers' Educational Associations in two States, and statutory bodies (councils or boards) in another three. The term normally connotes non-vocational non-credit study, and the main agencies have tended to adhere quite closely to this view. The various university departments of adult/continuing education or extension are rather wider in their view of their brief, but the emphasis is largely on general education and away from the areas of work-oriented education or training.

The Australian Association of Adult Education has in recent years reflected a trend away from segmentation by widening somewhat its definition of who is eligible for membership, for example to include external, not just extramural, studies in universities, and by entering into more active relationships with a number of other general educational and non-education agencies. Its annual conference late in 1973 took as its theme lifelong education, and attracted participants from industrial training, trade unions, the professions, and general departments of education, as well as from the sectors which constitute its own membership. It seems probable that this trend will continue, especially with the public dialogue occasioned by the creation of the open university and further and technical education committees, and that adult educators will increasingly re-examine their role from the recurrent education perspective.

Among member institutions of this national Association perhaps the most distinguished and lucid exponent of liberal adult education over a period of sixty years has been the Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales. It may be that the Association has at times contributed to segmentation in educational thought by polarising vocational training from liberal education, exaggerating the work/leisure dichotomy which contradicts the ideas of lifelong education, the learning society and recurrent education.

The Association has in recent years been open to dialogue about and with other educational sectors, acknowledging also that providers' intentions often do not correspond with the motives which bring students to the agency's classes. The outlook of the WEA of NSW, hindered though it still is by others' stereotypes and expectations about it, suggests that there may be more open dialogue between different sectors of post-compulsory education in future.

Similarly, the largest general provider of adult education (as its unique mission) in Australia, the Council of Adult Education in Victoria, has of late both widened its approach to its own provision and entered into more active co-operation with other educational providers in the State. This may help to develop a system of post-compulsory education - a trend fostered by the innovation in 1973 of a general handbook of all known adult education provision available in the State - and to articulate that system with the educational processes of the school system. Among partner-agencies in Melbourne is the Prahran College of Advanced Education. Prahran has redefined its role, uniquely within Australia, as an adult and community-oriented tertiary college which seeks to integrate with the learning needs and opportunities of the local community, and to attract mature-age students rather than compete with a plethora of other tertiary institutions for the same pool of school-leavers.

One ironical side-effect of the present Government's abolition of fees at tertiary level (to take effect in 1974) is that adult education students will have to pay sometimes substantial fees to study what can be studied free, possibly even in the same or an adjacent classroom at the same time, if they were enrolled for a degree or other course of the same institution. This places at a disadvantage the adult student, who may be socio-educationally underprivileged compared with internal students, and may be using an adult education class as an opportunity to test himself out before embarking on formal study. It is an anomaly caused by the government desire not to become generally responsible for refresher-type professional education, which would be a large open-ended commitment. It perpetuates one of the segmentations of educational thought and practice which militates against an integrated system of recurrent education.

# 7. PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

## 7.1 REVIEW

This report has reported widely, but by no means exhaustively, ideas and activities relevant to recurrent education in Australia. Examples have been presented to reduce the danger of too subjective an interpretation of Australia's development towards recurrent education. They range widely, from grass-roots challenges to the formal education system (school without walls, learning exchange) through to proposals for compulsory recertification (pharmacists, some medical specialisms) to suggest where recurrent education in Australia stands on a spectrum of thought about education. On the one hand lifelong learning and the learning society are wider; on the other professional refresher education accepts the status quo of initial continuous formal education and is narrower.

Another reason for presenting evidence rather than impressions is to suggest the diversity of thought and attempted modification of sub-systems, and the uneven rate of change. With the preparation, by way of interim committees, of major national commissions to develop different areas of Australian education, more rapid change may be predicted, but its direction remains uncertain.

Scarcely less significant may prove to be new initiatives from the Department of Labour in training and retraining, especially if the influence of overseas (European) ideas proves substantial. It is yet too early to predict whether thought about recurrence in education will be drawn into thought about manpower planning in a sufficiently substantial way to allow reconceptualisation of the latter. Should this happen, there may be a surge modifying the education system towards recurrence from an economic angle.

Thought about education among educationists appears to be changing rapidly. There is increasing acceptance for the view that work experience, or at least some exposure to the world outside school, should be introduced into the later years of schooling. Specifically it seems likely that more vocational education may be introduced into the later years of compulsory schooling to reduce the alienation of the less academic students. If the idea of actually lowering the leaving age of compulsory schooling has few supporters, at least it now seems improbable that the age will again be raised.

There is little to suggest that breaks during schooling, between school and post-school education, or during post-school education, might become normal, although there will probably be more instances of individual students taking such breaks within the present system. There are resistances to a change of system as such, particularly because many trades and professions make full qualification through training a pre-condition of membership and so to practise the trade. In universities there is a general preference for the "straight-through" student over part-time and interrupted study. To differing degrees this is written in to regulations, quotas, timetables and bursary arrangements. Most unpredictable is the extent to which a ground-swell among students towards interrupted study will influence the system. Probably this will be restricted for some years to an avant-garde sub-sector of the total student population (such as tertiary students interested in social science) since the majority of post-compulsory students reflect societal attitudes valuing education for the economic reward of its demonstrated attainment rather than intrinsically. This "finite" view of education and qualification prevails and militates against the recurrent concept. Probably, despite concern about graduate un- or under-employment, acquisition of a degree or similar qualification will continue to give access to highly valued socio-economic positions, and this concern may prove not to be a major force for change. It is however likely to stimulate more critical examination of university first and higher degrees, and of the balance between different disciplines and kinds of degree.

The technical and further sector promises to prove most dynamic in the immediate future, in terms of a shift towards recurrence. Problems of terminology and of purpose or mission are intertwined. At present the thrust of argument, for instance in the deliberations of and about the Kangan Committee, is towards clarifying the nature and scope of vocational education. (This is used in the sense of education for employment, rather than for personal enlightenment; it is usually interchangeable in casual conversation with technical education.) One tendency is to move into the further/adult/informal sector as far as the widest understanding of vocational education will allow, thus delimiting further education, which is the scope of the Kangan Committee.

There is little evidence that general education is yet accepted as a right of adults as well as children, little reciprocal to the view that secondary education should embrace more vocational elements and options. Nor has an "educational voucher" scheme attracted much discussion in Australia. Adult educators are however arguing with increasing confidence

that a vocational/general dichotomisation is artificial and misleading, that education must be a "continuing thread of experiences in the life-span of the individual". (WEA, 1973, 2).

A trend led by the Universities Commission is for non-credit education to be a charge on the adult student while formal degree, diploma and certificate study is or becomes free. This might be refined, in intention, to making initial vocational-type education (profession or trade) free, while levying a charge on both general/liberal adult education and refresher vocational education. A recent change in income tax regulations allows the latter to be tax deductible up to $ 400. This is likely to prove anomalous. Administrative categorisations do not correspond to the motives which bring students to different courses. It also discriminates against non-credit adult students, who, though largely middle class, are less markedly so than the clientele of tertiary education. For these reasons, in the context of efforts towards equality of educational opportunity, there will be continuing dialogue about the future of the education system as suggested by the terms of reference and reports of the federal education commissions and interim committees. The very existence of these commissions, and the segmentation of education by kinds and levels which they involve, constitutes a planning obstacle to a system of recurrent education for Australia. Overcoming segmentation is a practical task of major importance for educational administrators if the system is to move in this direction.

## 7.2 SPECIFIC AREAS FOR INQUIRY

This report has implied areas for investigation which would be common to education systems generally. They include : understanding of such terms as recurrent, continuing, lifelong education; attitudes and assumptions in the community and in educational institutions; legal problems; financial questions; organisational matters such as segmentation of educational thought and provision; and questions about community and individual needs, adult motivation and learning, and congruent teaching strategies.

Relevant research projects already under way in Australia include :

an investigation of aspects of the sandwich programme at the New South Wales Institute of Technology (McMillan, 1973);

an "open learning project" of the Western Australian Institute of Technology's Educational Development Unit, in harmony with that college's interest in external studies and more open access to post-secondary education, including especially post-experience education (Peters, Walker, 1973);

a research program on continuing education with special reference to the educationally disadvantaged, by the Australian Council for Educational Research (Fitzgerald, 1973).

Many specific areas of need were mentioned by correspondents assisting with this inquiry. In the area of attitudes and assumptions they include :

education valued for itself rather than as a ticket for employment;
the status and character of technical colleges and technical education; assumed intrinsic differences between different educational institutions, such as high schools compared with technical colleges;
attitudes towards education of early leavers;
the attitude of employers and unions to older age entry into various jobs;
the Universities Commission's treatment of adult/continuing education as different in kind and financing from other university teaching;
reconsideration of the nature and purpose of school curricula from the perspective of lifelong and recurrent education;
how to understand and change the attitudes of the adult population towards (recurrent) education, this examination to be linked with "a massive public relations exercise".

Several of these rather general research needs embrace or imply action research, to enhance understanding while at the same time seeking to foster an environment more favourable to recurrent education. Some are explicitly action-oriented, especially to change community attitudes and also the attitudes of education authorities and agencies where these tend to segment.

Other specific research needs include the following :

attitudes of professional groups to compulsory refresher education and recertification;
the effects of breaks in study, and of sandwich patterns of study, on student performance;
assessment and accreditation of work experience towards a qualification;
the effects of the "hidden curriculum" of the media, films etc.;
problems of inter-agency co-operation, particularly for transfer of students and accreditation, to be explored through pilot schemes;
the role of industry in training and retraining;
the various legal implications of lowering the age of school-leaving and of introducing work experience into the school-age curriculum;
the characteristics and effects of the juvenile labour market;
the costs of moving towards a recurrent model of education, including paid leave, loss of earnings etc.;

individual and community needs for "total" education, attitudes and motivation, including especially the educationally "under-privileged"; the learning abilities and consequent teaching needs of adults.

Several respondents suggested the need for more systematic knowledge about ideas and developments overseas, and coordination of research effort relevant to reconceptualising and restructuring the education system on recurrent education lines. There is also implicit in much of the discussion in Australia at present a need to construct alternative scenarios for the future of education in relation to the future of Australian society, to enable the options implied in both recurrent and lifelong education to be compared with other options. This would embrace the role of education and its contribution to social process and social change, a question which underlies the more specific needs and research proposals cited above, and particularly the implications of adherence to equal opportunity and concentration of concern on the minimally educated. As yet, such more general questions which relate education to social and cultural values and directions have not been well articulated, and this makes second order questions about the education system itself harder to answer.

## 9. SOURCES

The following sources were drawn on in preparing the report. Some are referred to in the text. Publications and other papers are listed with the year of publication. Personal communications (mostly by letter) were all in 1973 and are identified simply as (P.C.). (Other correspondence on the subject which did not provide specific information or opinion is not mentioned).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Dept. of Adult Education, University of Adelaide (P.C.).

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Faculty of Education, University of New England (P.C.).

Mackenzie A.J.
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McMillan J.W.
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Education Sub-Committee, Law Society of Western Australia (P.C.).

Mills E.W.
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